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ON PRAYER

MANFRED H. HAAS

I. The Nature of Prayer

Deep in the hidden jungles and distant forests of Asia or Africa stands a rude shrine or temple of wood or straw, decorated with gaudy colors, with rough and crude symbols and images. Were we permitted to look through the simple apertures serving as door or windows we might behold a humble native bowing down before a hideous and grotesque idol. But why should he kneel before the ugly image, why make such queer, jerky motions and utter the strange and weird ejaculations he emits? He is praying, seeking his god, trying to obtain the favor, or to appease the anger of his deity.

Our scene changes, and we find ourselves before one of the large, stately churches of Boston or New York. As we enter the lofty portals we are received by an usher, who leads us down an aisle and offers us a seat. An air of hushed silence and reverence fills the building, and at once we feel that we are not in an ordinary place; we feel that we are in the presence of God. The subdued tones of the organ tend to place the worshipper into a prayerful mood, and he soon joins others about him with heart and soul in singing the opening hymns. And then the congregation is called upon to rise or sit with bowed heads while the servant of God reads or offers a prayer. Yes prayer, what is it and what does it mean? What is its value and function for man in the various problems and vicissitudes which he is compelled to face during the entire course of his earthly life?

When we think of prayer it is natural to conceive of some particular form of prayer, thus of public or private prayer, or of prayer as a verbal expression of request and supplication, of praise and thanksgiving. But prayer is something more inward and radical in the religious experience of man than any mere posturing of the human form, or any mere sequence of words and phrases. Let us briefly inquire into its meaning, its nature and existence among men.

Prayer in its most primitive manifestation, according to the simplest definition, is an approach of man to the higher powers which he believes to be around and above him, now as benevolent, then as malevolent agencies. He feels that there are certain forces ever about him that are stronger than he is and consequently able to control his destiny. In order that he might avert their wrath and anger, or procure their good will and assistance, he is very much concerned about the best means and methods of approaching them successfully. He thus resorts to the use of the most costly and heavy sacrifices, to the frequent recurrence and repetition of certain cries, prostrations, gesticulations and humiliations, all of which are mostly but the mere instinctive reaction of his inmost uneasiness and bewilderment. The prayers of primitive man are often scarcely anything more than conjurations and incantations, or magic verses and formulas, proffered and chanted with the intention of softening and reconciling the supernatural spirits, the numina, with which he believes himself surrounded. But however primitively imperfect, yes selfish these prayers may be, they are yet an indication and manifestation of the vivid and painful consciousness of an innate need within him who prays, and of some unseen agent, some infinite, ultimate reality, which is able to hold dominion over his life and welfare and grant him a certain integration of his being.

In the course of his intellectual and spiritual development man increasingly comes to the realization of some great superhuman and supramundane Being, who controls the greatest and the smallest. He discovers God, or rather finds God in God's own Light, or in the light of His general or special revelation. He is constantly drawn to God, and in prayer as an instrument of communion he finds relief for his pent-up feelings and a granting of the deepest desires of his soul.

Professor E. S. Ames advances in one of the more modern works on Religion one of the many radical and extreme theories on prayer which are found to prevail in so many intellectual circles of today. Prayer, according to this scholar, is the conversation of an individual with some other being, with a friend or even with

some imaginary person or object. It is a habit, a conversation with the ideal, with somebody or something which can satisfy man's deepest longings and desires and embody his ideals. This conception may contain some elements of truth, but it is very doubtful whether any object of man's imagination or even an idealized person or hero would be able to answer our prayers, or satisfy the desires of our heart, as it is only possible for the most real and valuable entity, God himself, to do. We shall never consent to a reduction of prayer to a mere, though ever so powerful and valuable element of a purely subjective "As If" philosophy. No, we cannot and will not believe that our religious faith and our prayers born from it merely rest upon subjective, imaginary values. No man would continue to believe and to pray unless convinced of the reality of an invisible world and of a God, to whom we owe the religious and the prayer instinct and endowment, which is continually being fed by his life.

We would rather subscribe to the simple, though perhaps incomplete definition of prayer, as given in our Evangelical Catechism. We consider it as a conversation of the heart, man's true inner being with its implanted, ineradicable urge, with God, the most real being, in making supplication, giving thanks and offering praise. It is therefore the natural expression of man's soul communing with the soul of the Infinite, a seeking of the things which vitally concern and affect him in life, of help, strength, comfort, etc., from Him, who abundantly fills his needs and calls to the joy of gratitude and thanksgiving in His life and love.

II. The Place of Prayer

What place has prayer in the religious life of man? What is its importance? Can man get along without it? Since man is inherently religious and always has had and will have some outward forms of worship he must necessarily also have some way of showing his reverence and dependence, of telling God or letting Him know about his needs and duties. No religion could possibly continue to exist as a prayerless religion, and it has been rightly said, that "the experience of prayer is the end for which all true worship exists. Worship is the exercise through which man feels that he comes into a special relation with God, and prayer is the experience of having actually entered that relation." Prayer thus becomes the central thing in worship. It is its essence, its living spirit. It places man, if the phrase may be permitted, upon a certain level with God, enabling, perhaps ennobling, him in its finest form, to converse with Him as he would speak with a friend.

In the life of every honest and sincere Christian prayer may be said to take the most important place together with the experi-

ence of the fruits and the power of the revelation of God Himself as given in the record of this revelation, the Holy Scriptures. If a careful and earnest reading of the Word of God and a willing obedience to the promptings of His Holy Spirit can assist man in becoming a better and stronger being in true fulfilment of his life's purpose, then we may also claim the same effect for true reverential prayer. If regularly practiced in humble trust and faith it will inevitably grow into the most valuable habit, the most indispensable part of his daily life and routine. And furthermore, his experience of the countless blessings wrought in his life through prayer is corroborated by a similar experience on the part of other innumerable seekers after God in truth and goodness. Luther most beautifully has this to say on the place and power of prayer in the Christian's life:

"Wherever there is a Christian, just there is the Holy Spirit. He does nothing but pray unceasingly. For though he does not always move his lips or utter words, the heart so moves and beats so unceasingly with longing that one can no more find a Christian without prayer than a living man without a pulse. There are two kinds of speech in prayer: one when we speak to God and the other when God speaks to us. And His speech is far more comforting than ours."

III. The Function of Prayer

In determining whether prayer deserves a place in man's religious life we would furthermore ask: what has prayer done for man, what is its function and value?

"In its most elementary form prayer is marked by a strong petitional element." This element is given vent in petitioning either for oneself or for others. This petitioning among the ruder races of men takes the form of a plea to turn away anger or danger, coming from the gods, from the petitioner or those who are dear to him. Prayer thus chiefly manifests itself as an expression of the lower needs of man and of the desire to obtain material help. But it never rests content with this lower function. Man in finding and feeling that he is helpless to solve the most perplexing, the deepest problems of life, that only in a higher world and being can there be found the true rest and peace for his soul, reaches out for something higher and better than mere material gifts and gratifications. And therefore he will ask and pray for such gifts as peace, comfort, strength of soul, forgiveness of sins, and happiness in the eternal.

But man's true petition may and will also be made in behalf of his fellowmen or for some noble and worthy common cause. A

minister will pray for the safety, welfare, happiness of his country, his city, his congregation in times of distress and affliction. Loving parents cannot but pray for their children, true rulers for their country, true Christians for the coming of God's Kingdom with all that this may mean. The power and value of intercession even among men of hard hearts is so beautifully illustrated in the example of Damon and Pythias, or in picture and parable of the Lord Jesus Himself, or in that model intercessory, farewell prayer John 17, in which the Master pleads for his followers.

The true prayer for others, however, will always be based upon the believers' experience of a vital communion with his God and of a certain solidarity with His work. This communion with its expression in prayer renews his strength and courage, grants the beauty of self-control and conveys a new, fresh spirit and energy for all the conflicts which he may be called upon to face. His conversation with God tends to replace any mental burden or stress of uncertainty, of doubt and fear with a feeling of calm and peace, of trust and confidence. He feels a wonderful relief and escape from the troubles and worries which held him in bondage, a wonderful re-creation unto a new life in the face of his old enemies, in which he truly lives, moves and has his being.

One of the greatest and most useful functions of prayer is its discipline and preparation for greater and better service. It is an excellent school, in which we may learn the very important and necessary lesson of self-examination and humility. Many a man would never have discovered his mistakes, shortcomings and sinfulness if he had not communed with his God in prayer. For in the light of the throne of God there is no room for self-delusion and self-deception. Pride, temper, jealousy, selfishness, haughtiness and vindictiveness have often been conquered through the weapons furnished from the armory of prayer. All the drops and dust, the grime and filth of our sins and failings may be removed from our hearts if we have the desire for that thorough cleansing which the touch and contact with our God and Saviour through prayer cannot fail to convey. For in the prayerful communion with our God and Saviour all things are made new and clean.

But it is only in upright, self-searching earnestness that we shall be able to meet the conditions of blessed prayer. Jesus in repudiating the vain repetitions of the Gentiles and of his own countrymen, speaks of the need of entering our inner chamber and shutting our door before venturing to address the Almighty. It is only in the quiet of seclusion that we can truly be alone with ourselves, that we are able to take the time for pondering and meditating, something alas, almost dreaded by the noisy, running, hus-

tling men of today. In prayer we must and will think over things with ourselves and our God, thus finding the things we have need of, the things to be done and those to be left undone. Communion with God "supplies the most powerful incentive for the realization of the best that is within us."

But prayer does not only enable us to overcome our faults and frailties; it also prepares us for any special task we would wish to undertake. If we would dedicate our time and life to some great and noble cause, or enter into the service of God and man, we are often confronted by the vexing, doubting question: Am I really able and worthy to do this very thing? Am I possessed of the necessary courage, wisdom, knowledge to engage in God's and man's work as I should to honor my efforts? But if thus in hesitancy about any task we need only seek refuge and assistance in prayer, only go to God with our doubts, troubles and difficulties and only ask of Him, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not. Prayer, it is true, requires, but it also supplies faith and trust, which can believe and thereby receive all things working together for our good and thus for the good of others. It is the easiest way of learning the will of God, of touching the reservoirs of our strength and of preparing ourselves for any unselfish work and duty. When Jesus was about to enter his public ministry he spent forty days and nights in fasting and prayer in order to fit himself for the greatest of all tasks, man's redemption. And if he felt the need of prayer as the most thorough and intensive preparation for his tremendous task, why should not we also cultivate prayer in and for our work without ceasing. Heiler in his great work on prayer shows very convincingly, that great "religious revolutions took their rise not only in individuals, but in the hours when those individuals separated themselves consciously from the group and went apart to pray. At every great pivotal period of religion there stands a great individual wrestling in prayer." (The Hibbert Journal—A. W. Vernon.)

IV. The Value of Prayer

In our modern era of constant progress and development in many fields of human endeavor and especially in the pursuit of earthly comforts and conveniences man is only too readily inclined to measure all things according to the standard of purely material value. But there are very many things that cannot be estimated in terms of the material. The higher and nobler things in life, such as love, faith, peace, hope, truth, beauty, happiness, satisfaction can never be bought or sold by means of the coins that are made in the mints of time. Prayer belongs into the group of these

higher spiritual values and therefore also lies beyond the boundary of the merely material. Yet how often is it not prostituted to the almost exclusive aim of obtaining material benefits. And how often do we not meet while ministering to the sick, etc., with the opinion about prayer, that it is of little avail and use, because it does not work and has not worked as he who prayed wanted it to work.

The greatest value of prayer lies in its power to bring man into the closest contact with God, his greatest need. God to him who prays is the most real and personal Being, and while praying it is simply impossible to conceive of Him as a mere dim, vague figure of the imagination, a mere projection or an idealized personality. No, He cannot be treated only as if, as the philosophy of Vaihinger tells us; His reality and eternal presence alone are the power of the hold on the worshipper's devotion and loyalty. Thus to the little child, that seer of things divine, that has been taught to pray at the knees of a pious mother, the heavenly Father is an almost visibly real person, to whom one may tell everything. Yes, the little child even feels, as it were, that we can only have God as long as we can speak to Him, but also, that we can speak to Him at all times and everywhere.

The local separation from an earthly friend does not necessarily diminish, it rather often does enhance the sense of his reality for us, if at all a certain thought or letter communication is being maintained. Distance often, or the not seen, only tends to make so much dearer and nearer. And even so it is with our greatest Friend, ever present, to whom we may speak in a glorious prerogative and whom, though having not seen Him, we may love.

Prayer may also serve to wean man's mind away from the fleeting fancies and pleasures of this world, from the ordinary, practical, only too often sordid affairs of life. It prevents him from losing himself in directing his thoughts and desires to the Highest Good. There is too much of the Kato Anthropos within us and we only too easily lose sight of permanent values, or of the things that abide. The exacting affairs of this world, our home and family, our business and entertainments so easily sap our interest and longing for the best there is to be had and finally permit no other interests to thrive than those directed toward material enrichment and sensual indulgence. And this, of course, can only mean spiritual penury and starvation. But where daily prayer has become the pulse of our life, where we actually enjoy to be alone with our God, all the whirl and rush of this world with all its innumerable temptations and distractions will not be able to hold us in bondage, it will rather be mastered by us in the power drawn from God. Such

prayer will keep us from becoming grouchy, disheartened, indifferent; it will render us sweet and firm, friendly and fearless, and it will fit us to become God's coworkers in the work of man's redemption.

The beautiful eulogy on prayer from the Idylls of the Kings may close this short article:

> More things are wrought by prayer
> Than this world dreams of. Wherefore let thy voice
> Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
> For what are men better than sheep or goats
> That nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
> Both for themselves and those who call them friends?
> For so the whole round earth is every way
> Bound by golden chains about the feet of God.

THE MEANING OF THE TERM "MYSTERY" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

PROFESSOR J. BIEGELEISEN

I.

By a wide consent it is allowed that the writers of the New Testament, when calling any truth a "Mystery," do not by that term mean that it is in itself mysterious, in our modern sense. Yet it appears to be a difficulty for readers, and even for commentators, to free the term entirely from the spell of the idea of mysteriousness which in our customary thought and language attaches to the word. It is worthwhile making the attempt to point out the narrower but exact meaning which alone is warranted by New Testament usage by referring to the respective passages and their use of the term "Mystery".

The mystery may really be a mysterious truth; but the term says nothing upon the point one way or another. For example, the phrase "the mystery of Godliness," has no bearing upon the doctrine involved. In the New Testament the mystery lies not in the *obscurity* of the matter, but in its *secrecy*. The "mystery" is not *in* the thing, it has been wrapped *around* it; the thing is *involved* in mystery. In colloquial English we come near to this usage when we say, "He is making a great mystery of it," where the matter is perhaps in itself a thing perfectly simple. The classical mysteries were ceremonies and teaching, "kept dark," and reserved to the knowledge of an inner circle of initiated votaries. These initiated ones were under pledge (muein) to close their lips to the world outside. Undue weight should not be given to the derivational meaning in Phil. 4: 12 (memuąemai kai chortazesthai kai peinan); such niceties of origin and allusion are not adverted to in our current use of words. Yet the English and the American Revised Versions are accurate and suggestive in replacing the bald "I am instructed" of the Authorized Version by "I have learned the secret," as though Paul were one of the inner set of initiated worshippers to whom it had "been given to know" this "mystery of the Kingdom of God" and its regenerate life. Everything spiritual is, in our modern sense, a mystery utterly hidden from, and unknowable by, the "natural" man (1 Cor. 1: 18—2: 16). But given the faculty for spiritual things, e.g., the "eyes of the heart" (Eph. 1: 18, "being enlightened"),—they may be known. "God hath revealed them unto us" (1 Cor. 2: 10); in the particular case of which he is speaking, the secrecy is done away, and the way is clear for inquiry and for knowledge. So, still earlier, Christ had said to the representative group of disciples: "To you

it is given to know the mysteries" (Mark 4: 11; cf. Matt. 13: 11; Luke 18: 10).

In expounding 1 Cor. 2: 7 some commentators say: "Not comprehensible by unassisted human reason." But this would seem to be reading into the *word* more than is really there. Some Gospel "mysteries" are really such as they describe, but this is accidental. They may remain obscure when the secrecy is gone. But not even in 1 Cor. 14: 2 is anything necessarily involved but the concealment. "In the spirit he speaketh mysteries"; i.e., the speaker was specially accredited and endowed to reveal truth hitherto unknown; though, strangely enough, the general profitableness of the disclosure was conditioned by the presence of some one who would interpret the "tongue" in which the revealer spoke. Evidently no more is true of the special mystery of 1 Cor. 15: 51, "Behold I tell you a mystery," viz. the fact that some believers will never die, but that, like the newly-risen-dead, they shall be "changed at the last trumpet." To even unassisted human reason there is no difficulty in apprehending that as a fact of the history of the future. Paul is not expounding a difficult matter, but disclosing a concealed one. Unaided human reason never even suspected the fact of a resurrection; the method and the manner of it, and of the "change," even now are beyond its grasp. The whole disclosure to, and then by, Paul himself was part of his special Apostolic grace. But, once more, the mystery *in* the matter lies in this instance outside of his thought altogether. So again, the coming of the Gentiles into the church, on equal terms with the Jew, is another of the facts of history, apprehensible enough now that it is disclosed and realized, though it had been "a mystery hidden, from ages and generations" (Col. 1: 26). The mystery lay in the accident of its long concealment, as part of the purpose of God towards our redeemed world. No doubt there lie great and unfathomably deep spiritual facts behind and beneath the historical one. But they also are outside of Paul's thought when he calls the advent of the Gentiles a long-hidden "mystery." In short, it will be found that *the concealment,* and not any native inscrutableness, is all which is in any instance necessarily connoted by the New Testament use of the word "mystery." And it is often a great gain to the intelligent reading of Paul to clear away all added significance.

Paul regards it as perfectly conceivable that a man should so richly partake of the "charismata" of the spirit as to be able to say: "I understand all mysteries" (1 Cor. 13: 2)—It is noticeable how this seems to be distinguished from "understanding all knowledge"—

Yet such a man is to remember that himself and his similarly

endowed fellows are only "stewards of the mysteries" (1 Cor. 6: 1). There is nothing of priesthood; only a stewardship. They are "God's stewards" (1 Tim. 1: 7), a phrase which is admirably expounded by Peter (1 Peter 4: 1), "according as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." They are not proprietors; their possession of the mystery is only that they may be administrators or distributors. And so neither is the disclosure merely intended to add to the sum of our knowledge, nor to be the occasion of speculations, whose endless refinement should give employment to the leisure of subtle intellects. They are food, these mysteries—food for the household over which each steward has been set, that he may give to each his meat in due season. It is of the disclosure of one of these mysteries to himself that Paul writes: "If so be that ye have heard of the 'stewardship' of the grace of God, which was given to me to you-ward" (Ephes. 3: 2). The design of the disclosure is the practical usefulness of the newly revealed truth to the life of the individual Christian. Therefore the depository of such precious revelations is to "hold the Mystery of the Faith in a pure conscience." The supplied capital letters are no doubt an exposition, but what else does Paul mean than that the whole Faith, the *corpus* of Christian doctrine, the *fides quae creditur*, is itself one grand Mystery, from first to last a Revealed Secret, so far as it is known at all? (See Lightfoot, Galatians, p. 155). While, then, the teacher holds it, he must make a conscience of the reverent and faithful "holding," as well as of the frequent and faithful exposition and impartation of it. A "good thing has been committed to him" (2 Tim. 1: 2); he must keep his deposit unimpaired, that in due season he "may commit the same to faithful men, who shall teach others also" (2 Tim. 2: 2).

II.

If this restricted meaning of "mystery" really proves upon experiment to be one which can be carried through very many, or most, of the passages in which it occurs, it will require a high probability in the case of the rest, and even the right to fix the meaning of some, otherwise of uncertain signification. For example, it has been assumed that in 1 Tim. 3: 9 "the Mystery" is practically equivalent to "the Faith." Very similar is Eph. 6: 19: "that utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the Gospel, for which I am an ambassador in a chain." For centuries the books and ritual and history of the Old Testament has been big with the burden of a great secret. And now it was out at last. "The mys-

tery. . . . had been kept in silence through times eternal, but now was manifested, and. . . . made known to all the nations unto obedience of faith" (Rom. 16: 25, 26). The Gospel which Paul and his fellow-Apostles preached proclaimed the secret. Indeed, the Gospel was itself almost exactly the Secret now revealed. Typographically, again, the meaning might be made thus to appeal to the eye: "To make known with boldness the mystery of the Gospel." So in 1 Cor. 2: 7 "We speak God's wisdom in a mystery," we must connect, not "we speak. . . . in a mystery," but "God's wisdom in a mystery." The "wisdom of God" had been one of these long-kept secrets in His Divine counsels; the time for disclosing it had at last arrived. What the "wisdom of God" and the "Mystery" which is equivalent to the "Faith" or the "Gospel" are, will claim our attention next.

Every reader of the Pauline epistles is aware how fully and beyond all others those to Ephesus and Colossae deal with the topic of "The Mystery." Their Christology is special and of special value. They are also pre-eminently the epistles of the doctrine of the Church. And the connection between the two great disclosures of the Apostolic Age, The Christ and the Church, is very profoundly traced. Not many sentences of the letter to the Ephesians have been dictated before Paul is engaged with the great theme. God "has abounded" to Paul and to his people in His grace, in that He "has made known to them the mystery of His will" Eph. 1: 9. A close examination of the whole passage following will not only furnish his own exposition of the mystery he is thinking of, but will also confirm some of the expositions already advanced. What is this "will"? (For obviously there is little practical difference whether we regard verse 10 as exegetical of "will" or of "good pleasure." Certainly these two are not identical. The "will" is the outcome of the "good pleasure" put in motion. The "good pleasure" is the basis, the substratum of the "will"—*Thelaema,* the thing willed.) The reply is a vision of a Creaturely Universe, far wider than the world of earth, all "gathered together in one in Christ." It is a magnificent conception, a wonderful revelation. In the Son were all things created (Col. 1: 16); He is head over all things (Ephes. 1: 22). Things are what they are, in all their manifold variety of form and nature and purpose, because they embody some part of God's idea, which is only fully expressed in Him; "broken lights of Him," the central Sun from Whom they all radiate. Sin has marred this fair original order of creation. Through all the ages of Redemption, the will of God has been working towards a restitution of the broken or obscured order. When His will is done, then once more all the lines of creaturely existence

shall be found convergent upon and centering in Christ. He shall *head up* every category. He shall stand, the Middle Term, the Mediating Condition, between Creator and Creation, not one line, not one order of which shall not lead up to Him. This prospect of the future, the reconstitution (apokatastasis Acts 3: 21) of things, is left vague in its magnificent vastness. But in nearer view and clearer detail is a subsection of the great issue, viz., the reconstitution of the human race in Christ; the formation of a new humanity, Jew and Gentile, in a Church, in the day when believers come into their "inheritance," and God himself comes into full enjoyment of "His purchased possession" (vss. 11-14). Further on he returns to the matter, and (3: 2ff.) goes fully into what he had "written" above "in few words." This fulfilment of the will of God was, at that point in the religious history of the world, and in the personal religious life of his Gentile readers, taking this very practical shape, that they were coming into the new Israel as fellow-heirs, as fellow-members of the Body, as fellow-partakers with Jewish believers of the promise in Christ Jesus by the Gospel. To be a Jew no longer gave any precedence; there was no longer a disadvantage in being a Gentile. Manhood, fallen in all, redeemed in Christ, was now the one qualification. The Apostles and prophets of the Church (e.g. Acts 15 passim) frankly accepted the "mystery," startling fact as it was, and then, and for long after, almost unbelievable to many a Jewish-Christian. But it was, once more, part of Paul's "stewardship" to declare this mystery—a mystery no longer—and to make all men see" it (3: 2, 9 cf. Rom. 11: 25).

In the Divine and human (Gal. 2: 7-9) apportionment of the field for Apostolic labor, it was his special province to "preach among the Gentiles—*The Gentiles!*—the unsearchable riches of Christ." What a wonder to him, as an Israelite! And what a comfort to them as Gentiles, who were "without hope." "Christ in them." Why, that is in itself "a hope of glory." What a joy to him to be commissioned to "make known of the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles"! (Col. 1: 27) And then again the larger horizon comes into view in a profound saying (3: 10). Only a single phrase, but it is one of those little openings through which we can look out into a very large world. Israel had had its devout students of the unfolding history, and of the growing *corpus* of prophetic utterances, as well as of the significant ritual and types. No more reverent and dilligent students had there been than the prophets themselves (1 Pet. 1: 10-12). But none of them had ever dreamed of such a consummation as this. And there had been all the while a larger world of reverent, wondering students.

Paul was working along with God's purpose for the sake of "the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places."

The words suggest to us a very enlarged reading of "the hand of God in history." The story of our race, in its ruin by sin and its redemption by an incarnate God, is a factor in the moral education of principalities and powers—whatever these may be—and possibly of unknown and un-named orders of intelligent creatures in God's larger universe. This earth has been, so to speak, the great operating table planted in the midst of the great lecture theatre of the universe, and upon it God has been for ages, and is still, conducting a grand experiment, and giving a great demonstration for the instruction of the gathered student spectators. He has availed Himself—speaking humanly—of the melancholy fact of a sinful race, to give to all others of His creatures who are free to serve or sin, a great object lesson on the evil of sin, the curse which a creature prepares for itself when it refuses to submit its life to the law of its Maker. And then a parallel lesson is being given. In the process of redemption He is demonstrating His "manifold wisdom" before the astonished gaze. At one point in the process of recovery they saw an Incarnation wrought, and have since beheld upon the throne of God a Christ, a God-Man. When by and by the great Demonstrator, the Great Operator, has finished His work, they will see, proposed for their perpetual study, a reconstituted human race, a church, every member of which will stand forth *a replica* of Him.

Thus, then, the completely unveiled mystery will be dual in its unity, A Christ and a Church. Even in its present stages, the unfolding of the Mystery, the creation of a church out of such materials—Jews and Gentiles, and both sinners—is "to the praise of His glory," and, more precisely, "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (Eph. 1: 12, 6). When the result is complete, we may venture to conceive of the wondering universe of varied orders of intelligences, after watching and studying the embodiment and the exhibition of it in the redemption of Mankind, exclaiming, as human students will often have done before, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom of God!" (Rom. 11: 33). The vast lecture is full of the applause.

One extremely important passage belonging to this group remains for examination (Col. 2: 2), as interesting critically, as it is dogmatically important. We have seen that the historical realization of God's eternal idea has two factors: the historical and eternally permanent church, and the historical and eternally significant Christ. These are in closest interconnection. There are passages wherein Paul seems to merge the Body in its great Head. For

some purposes the head is, even to us, the man. Or, to use another of his illustrations of the matter, the wife is so one with her husband that she loses her own name. Adam with Eve is the "first Adam." So, once and again with Paul, Christ and His church together are Christ" (1 Cor. 12: 12; Gal. 3: 16).

The church is nothing apart from Him. His people are no church except in Him. Reverently speaking, the Son is no Christ apart from His people. It is an old question, and a deep one, whether, Sin apart, the Son would by incarnation have become the head of humanity. But now, at all events, incarnation and redemption have made Him "Head over all things to His church;" and its head, the second Adam, to a new race. Hence by an easy transition, we pass over to Eph. 3: 4 "Ye can perceive my understanding in the mystery of Christ," where the Mystery and the Christ are in apposition of equivalence. And we are thus brought, by a still easier stage to Col. 2: 2 "The Mystery of God (even) Christ"—(After long discussion it is not too much to say that the verdict of critical opinion is steadily settling down to this reading of this interesting and important passage of the Greek text.)—As in Phil. 1: 21 one word, one name, gathers up and expresses all the Apostle's life, its activities, its motives, its sources of power, its origin, its end, "To me to live is—Christ"; so here, one word, one name, one person, sums up and embodies all God's marvelous redemption, its great condition of possibility, its end, its earthly history, its eternal process and fulfilment; all are there—"Christ."

In the same Collossian Epistle we again come across the phrase (4: 3), "the Mystery of Christ," where, as a matter of grammar, the meaning may be doubtful. There is certainly not the clear apposition which we found in Ephes. 3: 4, but, as it fell upon the ear of the early church, at the first public reading of the letter after it came from Rome, it could hardly fail to recall the profound passage (2: 2, 3) which has just been discussed. At any rate the passage finds its correct interpretation if we understand "the Mystery of Christ" to be here also equivalent to "the Word of God," as it is in 1: 26; the practical working shape in which he was accustomed to put so much of the larger truth about the Mystery as was needful for his preaching, whether to Jew or Gentile. The "Gospel" which Christian teachers proclaim is the practical working shape of the "Mystery of Christ."

III.

There are two important "mystery" passages which it is very natural to bring together, "The mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. 2: 7), and "The mystery of Godliness" (1 Tim. 3: 16). It is inter-

esting to note how these expressions occur in the earliest and latest pages of Paul's correspondence respectively; if, that is, the Pastoral Epistles be his. And the coincidence of expression has more than a little critical value as bearing upon the question of the authorship of both letters. At any rate it contributes to the conviction that the author of the one may be the author of the other. We expect to find in the correspondence, as in the speech of any literary work, of a capable man covering any long tract of years, the essential ideas the same, even when the phraseology is different in which they are clothed. On the other hand, in this instance, the phraseology is the same, exactly where we should expect to find it unchanged; not in the passing and trivial vocabulary, caught up from, and getting a changing color from, the talk of the daily surroundings with its endless variation of temporary fashions of phrase, but in the expression of those fundamental ideas and beliefs, often reverted to and re-examined, often and deeply pondered over, and growing clearer, and more valued and "vital" as the years go by. The word "Mystery" and the doctrine of "the Mystery" very early became part and parcel of the writer's life-long and habitual language and thought. It was made known to him in the first instance "by revelation".

The connection of contrast which is suggested is not admitted by all commentators as legitimate. But a strong defence will be made out if it should prove that an exposition of the phrases upon parallel lines justifies itself. The pairing of the expressions under notice falls in with perfect naturalness with the parallelism of development and phenomena found to run very closely between the facts of the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness. Every fact in the history or administration of the Kingdom of God has its devilish duplicate and counterpart. The evil imitation only succeeds in being a poor copy; in some cases it is perhaps intentionally a parody or a caricature. The culminating instance is the counterpart Christ, the Anti-Christ. "The god of this world" (2 Cor. 4: 4) is the great Anti-God. He has his types, his prophets and their prophecies, his miracles ("lying words"). Over against "the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2: 10) are set the "depths of Satan" (Rev. 2: 24). The mark of the beast is an evident imitation of the seal set upon the forehead of the elect of God. And so, too, the man of sin looks, with a fearful probability, like an attempt at an Incarnation and a Parousia combined. If the connection holds, then, between our two "mystery" passages, some help is given towards the interpretation of the rather vague word "Godliness" (to taes eusebeias mustaerion). It will satisfy the exposition of the two passages and the parallelism of the two orders, the

good and evil, if "The Mystery of Iniquity" be that Devil's gospel, whose contents, and whose natural and inevitable tendency are "iniquity"; whose whole characteristic is "lawlessness," the refusal of all respect for the will of God or man, the very embodiment, in intellect and will and heart, of self and self-pleasing. Whereas "The Mystery of Godliness" will be that Gospel of God, which is not only good news to men without hope and without God, but which is also a great revealed scheme of doctrine and history, the burden and contents and aim of which are a loving but reverently careful regard for the will of God and things divine. The unveiling of this mystery began before the Incarnation. In Old Testament days it might have been said, "The Mystery of Godliness doth already work." Since the coming of Christ and the Revelation in the written Word, the secret is open, so far as it can be until the consummation of all things dissipates the last obscurity, and turns all prophecy into history, and all hope into fact.

Finally, there are three quasi-isolated "mysteries":

1. Rev. 1: 20, "the mystery of the seven stars." Here again, when the explanation is given, there is nothing in itself inscrutable about the fact symbolized by the seven candlesticks, or stars, which John saw. Christian preachers and expositors have been using its now open secret for the edification of the pious ever since it became common property of the church. It was a thing which needed disclosing; it was unknown until the great revealer disclosed it.

2. 1. Cor. 15: 51, has partially come under review already. That there shall be some who shall not die; that these shall undergo a "change" which will put them, in their bodies which they have never quitted, into exactly the same condition as the risen dead who then receive "spiritual" bodies; this is the disclosed secret of the future. The very fact of a resurrection, as has been said, never occurred to unaided reason, and, when revealed, puts a greater strain upon reason and faith both, than do most divine facts. The authority for Paul's announcement may be rejected as insufficient, and the fact may be disbelieved. But as a fact asserted, the thing is apprehensible enough. Any "mystery" lies only in the concealment of it from ordinary human knowledge.

3. Last of all is Eph. 5: 32 "This is a great mystery; I speak of Christ and His Church." The full significance of the marriage tie was not disclosed or discoverable until Christ and His Church in their oneness stood forth at last revealed. The deep-lying basis of monogamy is there, and its one secure sanction. The reason for a marriage bond of life-long permanence and of exclusive obligation, is found in the great revealed Union. The approximate

equality of the sexes in numbers and privileges points toward monogamy. Social and civil experience turns the scale in favor of it, and against temporary unions and easy divorce. There are abundant physical vindications of marriage, as against every variety and degree of merely animal indulgence. Yet none of these is sufficient against the revolt of sensual ages, and the recrudescence of that heathen naturalism which lies in modern humanity, even in Christian communities. Let the positive command of God be removed, and there is really no secure or necessary halting place in a swift descent to the unregulated intercourse of the sexes. No "natural," or prudential, or sentimental reason is found to be unchallengeable, whether in speculation or in practice. And the truth underlying God's enactment and the constituted order of marriage is this now revealed secret, this "mystery" now disclosed. . . We reach firm ground here. The union between Christ and His church was coming. On that model God had ordained married life. In fact, we are upon one of those great trunk lines of developing idea of which the order of creation is full, and all of which converge upon Christ. In Him God's thoughts are all outspoken. The physical union of the lower and lowliest creatures are the first faint shadows of what is coming. The inviolable union of man and wife, "one flesh," is a fuller approach. When this is coupled by a union of heart, and of congruity of temper, and tastes, and interest, and station; and above all, when this is cemented still more firmly by their "joint heirship of the grace of life" (1 Pet. 3: 7) then the whole truth is almost told there. But not quite, even then; the great foundation fact remains a "mystery" still. Paul here is commissioned to disclose it.

The union is not like marriage; marriage is like it. In the order of the Creator's thought, if we may so boldly speak, this is the pattern; marriage is modeled upon the lines of this. This last "mystery" text is, after all, therefore, not an isolated case of the use of the word. The mystery of marriage is after all the great mystery which we have investigated above, "Christ and His Church." Marriage, like all things else, was created "*In Christ.*"

THE EMANCIPATION OF SIXTY MILLION GIRLS IN INDIA

By Missionary M. P. Davis

It is tragically disappointing that the Western World has taken so little notice of events leading up to an incident which effects more people than the total population of France or of Great Britain. When Tsar Alexander II liberated the serfs of Russia from vassalage in 1861, it affected only 22 million persons; when Lincoln declared the Negro to be free in 1863 only 3½ million came under the act. Among these millions, of course, the men were primarily considered,—and men usually write history and edit newspapers and magazines, hence the weaker sex receives less notice, unless their mention can increase sales.

It distresses one to note that no paper or magazine coming to my door from America seems to have been aware of the fact that India has a mass of voiceless slaves for whom an enlightened and sympathetic few were very much concerned to the extent of accepting abuse and odium from their fellowmen. It is surprising indeed that apart from isolated friends the outside world has taken so little notice of the fact that almost 60,000,000 girls under the age of 15 years were being held in the bondage of early marriage with but few spokesmen to plead their cause. Or, to be more exact, the parents and guardians were the slaves and the girls the victims of the custom; for in the end it was the parents who were bound by the csutom, slaves to tradition, and society compelled them to remain so.

Not all of the sixty million, or, to be more exact, 59,643,390, are actually married before the age of physical maturity, but most of them are potential candidates for child-marriage until the law of emancipation goes into effect April 1st, 1930. The percentage of girls who are married before the completion of the 15th year "will probably be nearer 50 percent than otherwise" (age of Consent Report). In 1921 in the whole of India 2,616,473 girls below 10 years of age were married, also 6,500,000 between the ages of 10 and 15. This does not mean that they at once lived with their husbands, but that consummation takes place occasionally before, and most frequently immediately after puberty. Yet if a girl was married at eight and her husband died soon thereafter, it meant that she became a widow permanently. A detailed survey has exploded the myth that girls in warm climates mature "long before" those of cooler countries, and hence earlier marriages were in place. "The influence of tropical climates in causing early

menstruation seems to have been overestimated; in Europe the age is 14-15, in India usually between the 12th and 14th year".

India made one great error. It believed that menstruation is a sign of bodily maturity and complete physical development rather than only a sign of puberty and capacity to conceive. Combined with this error is the religious dictum that only then is a father assured of future bliss when he has a son to perform various religious ceremonies at and after his death. What then should be more natural than that girls and boys be married at the earliest possible moment in order to be assured of the blessing of a son. Countless Hindus still believe religiously that it is a sin to postpone a daughter's marriage longer than 16 days after puberty. Yet the 1921 census reveals that early marriage does not assure the desired gift. In Bengal, for instance, 9 out of 10 girls are married before the age of 16, and yet the birth rate of Bengal is the lowest in India.

It was not always customary to marry girls at so early an age. This was not done when the Aryans migrated into India. Some think that it may have been due to the spreading influence of Buddhism over India that caused parents to lower the marriage age for children. Celibacy became so widely prevalent and the number of monks increased so rapidly that parents worried. Should all their daughters become nuns? A powerful antidote was obviously needed. Child marriage would solve the problem, early marriage would prevent the young men from having opportunity to decide for the life of a monk.—Some Hindus claim that the custom became general at the time of the Muhammedan invasion (about 1,000 A.D.) in order to safeguard their girls from capture by the polygamous invaders. Others suggest that fear for the girl's morality was a contributing factor in lowering the age. Not a few say that because the daughter was to join the husband's family and tribe, it was an economical saving to the parents to send her there as soon as possible. Others argue, even now, that it is very necessary to allow the bride to enter her husband's family circle very early in order the easier to adapt herself to their habits and customs. In short, after the custom had once become rigid and established, apparently among the higher castes first, fear of social ostracism prevented parents from breaking it. Undoubtedly the joint family system encouraged its continuance.

The mass of suffering and the many evils resulting from the early consummation of marriage became so commonplace that India, no less human than the West in this respect, soon accepted the evil as a matter of fact, as something to be tolerated, as something that has been for ages and that will continue to be thus;

few attempts from within were made to alter the situation. Several "age of consent" laws were passed, but were not effective other than to call attention to the existing evils resulting from child-marriage. Enlightened Indians called upon the Government to remedy the situation. Before doing so it was considered wise to gather reliable and detailed information. In June, 1928, the "Age of Consent" committee was appointed. Then able and prominent Hindus and Muhammedans were untiring in their efforts to accomplish their task. Twelve long months they labored and travelled and investigated most faithfully in order to ascertain facts upon which the proposed legislation may be based. The investigation was carried out at a cost of over 100,000 dollars. Facts and figures spoke so loud that men desiring the welfare of their country could not remain silent and inactive. Courageous men they were to suggest a radical change, more courageous Mr. Sarda who sponsored the Bill in the face of many opponents who were unwilling that an entrenched custom of 12 or 15 centuries' standing be altered.

The task of the committee was not an easy one. India is a group of nations and races, not a homogeneous country like Germany or France. Each group, each caste, each religious community has its own peculiar cherished age-old customs. Frequently the alarms were sounded: "Religion is in danger," "Personal liberty is being attacked." Nasty remarks were hurled at the "westernized Indians" who would overthrow the heritage of a golden past. Surely the way of the reformer is hard. Yet they continued courageously. Well prepared questionnaires were sent to all classes of leaders; in order to have personal interviews with friends and foes of the proposed Bill visits were made to all ends of India. Census reports were carefully studied, hospital and health statistics were scrutinized,—all in the interest of India's wronged girlhood,—all for one purpose: to determine at what age an Indian girl can safely marry and assume the duties of motherhood. To placate the traditionalists, to effect a compromise satisfactory both to the advanced and orthodox circles was a task worthy for the gods. Orthodoxy refused to be placated. Fortunately awakened consciences were more active than retrogressive orthodoxy.

Considering the vast millions of people who observe the entrenched custom it is indeed marvelous that so much has been accomplished. The 1921 census reported as follows:

More than 15,000 widows and 218,000 married girls under 5 years of age.

Over 102,000 widows and 2,000,000 married girls 5 to 10 years of age.

Over 279,000 widows and 6,330,000 married girls 10 to 15 years of age.

Over 500,000 widows and 9,635,000 married girls 15 to 20 years of age.

But cold figures can not picture the fate of 914,000 widows under 20 years of age, figures can not depict the total amount of agony suffered by the 25 million girls married before reaching the age of 15. The fact that between the ages of 5 and 15 the death rate of girls is more than three times that of boys of the same age suggests to one not only that sick girls receive less attention and care than boys, but also that early marriage compels the girls to pay the cost.

The report of the above committee reveals that the "age of consent" law in British India has contributed very little toward the elimination of the evil and the raising of the age. Even in Baroda State, where a marriage law existed, many parents preferred to pay the fine than observe the law.

In order to do justice to religious opinions the committee asked the leaders of India's 66 million Muhammedans to state what the Quran prescribed regarding the age for marrying girls. They replied that to them marriage is a contract and not a sacrament. They were practically agreed that the Quran does not dictate any certain age, yet less does it favor marriage before the age of puberty. Thus so far as the teaching of the Quran was concerned a law setting the age at 14 should not offend the Muhammedan community. Many Muhammedans and not a few outside Muhammedanism even went so far as to claim that child-marriage was seldom found in their midst. The survey exploded this myth. In Bengal, for instance, where the Muhammedan population is over 25 million, it was found that 52 girls out of 100 between 10 and 15 years of age were married. This revelation won many converts from among their number for the Bill setting the minimum age at 14. (For comparison one may state that during 1928 only 57 girls among 303,000 marriages in England and Wales were 15 years of age).

The case for the Hindus was different and far more difficult, because Hinduism considers marriage a sacrament dictated by religion with which a secular government has pledged itself not to interfere. In order to ascertain what the Vedas and other shastras (religious books) actually do prescribe regarding the proper time for the marriage of girls several meetings were arranged in various parts of India in which learned Pandits (Hindu theologians) were asked to supply definite answers from their respective religious books. In one case 50 Pandits were divided into six groups, each giving a different answer. In another conference

of 131 Pandits four parties gave four different answers. A third meeting with 93 Pandits was no less divided. Most of them agreed in one respect: marriage should not be postponed more than two weeks after puberty. Last year the All India Brahmin Conference decreed that: "The marriage of a girl of 8 is most commendable." (This, of course, does not imply that consummation and cohabitation takes place at that time).

Anticipating support from Government and a large portion of the Assembly and the public in general Mr. Sarda, an Indian member of the Legislative Assembly, introduced the so-called 'Sarda Bill' according to which no parent or guardian is allowed to arrange for or marry a girl before her completed 14th year and no boy before his completed 18th year. (By setting the age at 14 it is hoped that actual consummation will not take place until later). Sept. 23rd, 1929, the Bill was passed in the Legislative Assembly by the unusually large majority of 67 to 14. The Council of State passed it soon after.

What then caused Government to lend its support to the Bill in the face of the accusation that it was contrary to the Queen's proclamation according to which Britain pledged itself not to interfere with religious customs? Many Muhammedans and Hindus pleaded that Government remain silent and neutral in the matter. There was only one answer to give: when the practice of a religious custom is detrimental to the welfare of a large number of people then common sense dictates interference. The following facts justify not only Government's active support but also the actual passing of the Bill.

According to the 1921 census there were 2,825,529 more Muhammedan males than females, and 3,501,810 more male Hindus than females, a total of 6,327,339 more males than females. Add to this the fact that there are no less than 700,000 Hindu widows below the age of 20 most of whom can not marry under the present custom, and one can well understand that abnormal conditions must exist. Considering furthermore that a number of Hindus have two wives and that the Quran allows Muhammedan men to have four wives,—the balance between the men and available number of girls for wives is even more disturbed. The report of the "Age of Consent" committee remarks that "The prevalent negligence of girls would also probably account to some extent for the paucity of females." In our Chhattisgarh area parents are far more willing to spend money for medicine or a doctor's services when a son is ill than when a daughter is the victim. Flagrant carelessness when girls are born is also a contributing factor for the paucity of females, and reminds one of secret infanticide. Be-

cause of this lack of girls there is a good deal of seduction and abduction of young girls, Hindu widows, and even married women going on in India. More about this another time.

Another factor enters in. Early marriages cause an exceptionally high death rate among young mothers and babies. The maternal death rate at time of childbirth is four times greater in India than Europe. (Untrained midwives are also partly to blame for this, not only early marriages). Death rate at the first confinement is exceedingly high. India does not seem to fully realize its sad error. It considers that the *capacity* to conceive at puberty also signifies the *necessity* to conceive at that time without considering that puberty does not always signify complete physical maturity. Few fully realize that cohabitation at the time of puberty, irrespective of the physicial condition of the girl may do irreparable harm. In one medical survey it was ascertained that out of 7,160 children born 166 were stillbirths, and of the remainder 780 died in the first month of life. Statistics of premature child births would tell another sad story. In Bengal, where child marriage is most prevalent, 52 percent of the infants die within one month of their birth.

Many evil results of early marriage become evident only after several years of married life. "Old women at 30" is the mild way one of the members of the committee expressed it. Add to the frequent confinements and the many physical disabilities accompanying early marriage the custom of purdah, then one can easily understand that the death rate among young mothers would be disproportionately high. Powers to resist disease are quickly sapped. Early cohabitation is too great a shock for the nervous system of most child wives. Throughout life the effects may show themselves in one form or another: sterility, debility, chronic invalidism and inability to nurse infants.

Some advocates of early marriage favored an early age in order to prevent girls from "going wrong," yet in Bengal where early marriages are most prevalent "prostitution begins at an early age, 11, 10 or even 9."

Opponents of the Bill for raising the age were most numerous among the men. Seldom did one find women, especially those who could find a way of voicing their sentiments, opposing it. In unmistakable language they expressed themselves in favor of raising the age limit. Many even advocated 16. One Indian lady secured the signatures of 10,000 women favoring 14 as the minimum age. It is unfortunate that so many men, who have suffered least, should want to prolong the custom of child marriage. A study of its effect on the young men would undoubtedly bring forth unsavory revela-

tions. Not a few former opponents became converts in favor of the Bill when the committee's survey was published. Yet in spite of the public accounts in the daily press many men exposed themselves by voicing their objections in the correspondence column, pleading that the age be set at 11 or 12.

During discussions in the Legislative Assembly Muhammedans introduced an amendment according to which their community would be excluded from the law. This was rejected 71 to 16. Orthodox Hindus introduced a similar amendment to exclude all Brahmins and 'conscientious objectors.' This also was thrown out. Another proposed 11 as the minimum age, which, he claimed, was a great advance in view of the fact that no minimum age had thus far existed (excepting for the Christians and Parsees). Another proposed 12, and was defeated 68 to 19. During all these debates Indian women picketed the Assembly and the approaches, calling for support of the Bill "in the interest of humanity and India's womanhood." Government received 155 petitions and 522 representations against the Bill. Pandit Motilal Nehru, a great Indian leader, was unrelenting in his plea that the Bill be passed: "We are on our trial before the civilized nations. . . The custom of early marriage is undoubtedly a curse and must be completely abolished at all cost, the supposed sanction of religion notwithstanding." Humor was not missing. One enthusiast retorted to an orthodox opponent: "If you desire a better kind of cow, why not also a better kind of human being?" A Muhammedan opponent called out: "Soon the Government will forbid us to have four wives." One member argued that the sanctity of marriage would be destroyed and the women of India would be degraded to the level of the women of Europe and America! When the final vote was taken 8 Muhammedan members left the Assembly hall in protest, because the new law "interferes with our religious liberty."

Even after the law was passed by the Legislative Assembly and by the Council of State, opposition continued. A Muhammedan deputation visited the Viceroy and pleaded with him not to sign the Bill. When Mahatma Gandhi addressed a meeting in Benares, the citadel of orthodox Hinduism, a violent attempt was made to break up the meeting because he had favored the Bill. A Calcutta meeting ended in riot; opponents and advocates of the Bill crowded into the same hall and each group finally used chairs and bricks to convince the other side. In Madras Presidency a number of 'diehards' advocated open violation of the law, even though their numbers should fill the prisons.

April 1st, 1930 the Sarda Bill becomes effective as a law, after that date no girl may be married before her 14th completed

year, and no boy before his 18th completed year. To do so may mean a month's imprisonment or a fine of a thousand rupees for the offenders (especially parents). Much propaganda will have to be undertaken to make the provisions of the new law made known. This the Government is well able to do. With its well organized machinery the news will be carried to the most isolated hamlet.

When the present 60,000,000 girls under 15 years of age grow up they will bless the memory of those who passed this law of emancipation. The present 400,000 widows under the age of 15 will be thankful that in the future few of their younger sisters will be condemned to the sad fate of widowhood so early in life. This new law will make impossible the marriage of old men to little girls of tender age. It will reduce the death rate of young mothers and babes. It will give girls and boys a youth during which they may think of other things besides marriage, attend school longer and prepare for the tasks and duties of motherhood and fatherhood. Parents who opposed early marriage but were driven to consummate them by a tyrannical orthodoxy and caste tradition will now breathe a sigh of relief. The number of still-births will be decreased perceptibly. The new law will make possible stronger babies and healthier generations for the future. In short this emancipation of Indian girlhood is relaying a solid foundation for a greater India.

Wesen, Wert, Wahrheit der Religion

Von Professor Grützmacher.

Zum Wesen des Christentums gehören eine Reihe weltanschaulicher Gedanken. Darum steht es in Beziehung zu der die Weltanschauungsfragen bearbeitenden Philosophie. Die Auseinandersetzung mit ihr wurde in den Aufsätzen des vergangenen Jahres vollzogen. Seinem innersten Wesen nach aber ist das Christentum **Religion.** Darum ist es am stärksten an allen die Religion betreffenden Problemen interessiert und stellt die Theologie vor die Aufgabe, mit den jene bearbeitenden Zweigen der allgemeinen Religionswissenschaft in Verbindung zu treten. Diese beschäftigt sich in der Hauptsache einmal mit der Bestimmung des Wesens, des Wertes und der Wahrheit der Religion, dann aber auch mit den geschichtlichen Formen der Religion und ihrem inneren Zusammenhang. Ist das Christentum Religion, so ist es genötigt, sich an der Wesensbestimmung der Religion überhaupt für interessiert zu erklären. Der allgemeine Wert der Religion betrifft auch das Christentum mit, die Wahrheit der Religion überhaupt hat auch für das Christentum Bedeutung, während der Nachweis, daß alle Religion ohne berechtigten Wahrheitsanspruch wäre, auch das Christentum beunruhigen müßte. Die andern Religionen sind Verwandte, aber ebenso Gegner des Christentums. Darum ist es nötig, zwischen ihnen das Maß des Gemeinsamen und des Gegensätzlichen richtig zu bestimmen. Das geschieht prinzipiell durch die Feststellung des allgemeinen Verhältnisses des Christentums zur Religionsgeschichte, konkret durch die Auseinandersetzung mit den bedeutsamsten fremden Religionen. Von ihnen kommen ernsthaft als Konkurrenten des Christentums heute nur noch in Betracht: Der Buddhismus und der Mohammedanismus. Die christliche Apologetik hat mithin unter religionsphilosophischen Gesichtspunkten zu behandeln:

A. **Wesen, Wert Wahrheit der Religion.**
B. **Die Stellung des Christentums in der Religionsgeschichte.**
C. **Christentum und Buddhismus.**
D. **Christentum und Mohammedanismus.**

I.

Das Wesen der Religion.

Soll das Wesen der Religion bestimmt werden, so ist damit die Gewinnung ihrer konstitutiven und unveräußerlichen Merkmale gemeint. Diejenigen Bestandteile der Religion sollen erfaßt werden, ohne die sie niemals existiert hat und auch in Zukunft nicht existieren kann. Mannigfache Wege zur Wesensbestimmung

der Religion sind beschritten worden. Der nächstliegende ist die ethymologische Wortdeutung von religio. Aber einmal ist durchaus nicht gesagt, daß Wortbezeichnung und Wesensbegriff einer Sache sich decken, da erstere häufig zufällig entstanden ist; dann aber gibt es gerade für Religion drei grammatisch gleichmögliche Ableitungen, von denen die aus religare, die von ihr eine pietätvolle Gebundenheit an Gott aussagt, noch am stärksten dem Wesen der Religion gerecht wird. Ein zweiter Weg zur Wesensbestimmung der Religion ist der philosophisch-spekulative. So hat Hegel die Religion als das Selbstbewußtsein des absoluten Geistes bestimmt, während Kant in ihr die Erkenntnis unsrer Pflichten als göttlicher Gebote sah. Aber diese Definitionen, sind ganz deutlich Ableitungen aus dem System der betreffenden Philosophen und betonen an ihr nur die Elemente, die gerade ihnen an der Religion sympatisch sind. Der geradeste und sicherste Weg zur Wesensbestimmung der Religion ist der empirisch-induktive. Man nimmt sich zunächst die Erscheinungen vor, die der „Common sense" als religiöse bezeichnet und sucht ihre gemeinsamen Merkmale auf. Man erhebt sich von der Fülle der einzelnen Erscheinungen zu einem in ihnen allen enthaltenen Wesensbegriff. Dieser Weg ist um so erfolgversprechender, als er sich in zwei Pfade teilt, die man zunächst unabhängig voneinander gehen kann, die aber zu dem gleichen Ziele führen. Religion ist nämlich einmal eine objektive geschichtliche Erscheinung, die eine Reihe bleibender Schöpfungen hervorgerufen hat, wie religiöse Bauten, Bücher, Sitten, Kultushandlungen. Zum andern aber ist die Religion eine subjektive seelische Zuständlichkeit, die sich von andern seelischen Bewegungen wie der künstlerischen, wissenschaftlichen, abgrenzen läßt. **Die Wesensbestimmung der Religion hat mithin induktiv-empirisch die objektiv beharrenden, wie die subjektiv persönlichen Erscheinungen der Religion auf ihre charakteristischen Merkmale hin zu untersuchen.** Durchmustert man das erste Gebiet, so findet man, daß es eigentlich keine innerweltliche Erscheinung gibt, die nicht in irgendeiner Religion eine Rolle spielt. Steine wie Pflanzen, Menschen wie Tiere, Höhen und Tempel, Musik und Plastik, alles kann zur Religion in Beziehung treten. Der religiöse Charakter dieser Erscheinungen kann aber nicht in ihrer innerweltlichen Eigenart liegen, sondern nur darin, daß sie mit einer andern Wirklichkeit verbunden erscheinen, die sich von der profanen Welt unterscheidet. Religiöses Kultusobjekt ist der Stein der Kaaba, nicht wegen seiner irdischen Beschaffenheit, sondern weil er vom Himmel gefallen sein soll; Brot und Wein werden nur in dem Augenblick religiöse Objekte, wenn man in ihnen zugleich göttlichen Leib und göttliches Blut erscheinend glaubt. Ein Tempel wird ein religiöser Bau, nicht

durch seine Säulen und ihr Verhältnis zueinander, sondern nur durch den Glauben, er sei die geheimnisvolle Wohnung unsichtbarer Geister. Durch diese Verbindung mit einer neuen Wirklichkeit werden aber die betreffenden Objekte dieser Welt entrückt und sogar im Gegensatz zu ihr gestellt. Der Stein der Kaaba wird verhüllt, das Innerste des Tempels ist unzugänglich; geweihtes Brot wird im Tabernakel eingeschlossen. Religion erhält als Merkmal positiv die Beziehung zu einer andern Welt, negativ eine Distanz zu dieser Welt. In einem Wort zusammengefaßt ist die Religion die Sphäre des Heiligen. Aber indem sich das Heilige durch Erscheinungen dieser Welt vermittelt, in ihnen transparent wird, ist damit gesagt, daß die jenseitige und diesseitige Welt nicht nur voneinander getrennt sind, sondern auch miteinander eine Verbindung eingehen können. Aus der Sphäre der Religion führt ein Weg in unsre Welt hinein, aber auch umgekehrt kann man in irdischen Gebilden das Tor zur Ewigkeit sehen. **Als erstes konstitutives Merkmal der Religion ergibt sich die Annahme einer zweiten, aber durchaus wirklichen Welt des Heiligen, die sich von der Sinnenwelt unterscheidet, aber doch auch in sie hineinragt und durch ihre Vermittlung zugänglich wird.**

Diese unsichtbare Welt erscheint in allen Religionen als eine menschenähnliche und doch auch wieder übermenschliche. In heiligen Bäumen flüstern Geister wie Menschen, und doch wieder ganz anders als diese. Auch die Toten, soweit sie Gegenstand religiösen Kultus werden, sind bei aller gebliebnen Menschenähnlichkeit doch beweglicher und mächtiger als diesseitige Menschen geworden. Eine gewisse Personifizierung und Individualisierung der religiösen Kultusobjekte ist wenigstens in den Anfängen in allen wirklichen Religionen zu beobachten. Sie verschärft und klärt sich in den höheren Religionsformen Infolgedessen treten immer deutlicher Götter hervor. Der Philosoph Wundt rechnet zu den Hauptmerkmalen von Göttern, daß sie raumzeitlich erhaben sind, eine höhere Wohnung und eine längere Lebensdauer besitzen. Das Maß der göttlichen Ueberlegenheit über den Menschen wird verschieden gedacht, je nach der Auffassung, die man von Wesen und Macht des Menschen hat. **Der Gottesgedanke** — wie verschieden er auch immer ausgeprägt sein mag — **ist das zweite konstitutive Wesensmerkmal der Religion.**

Zwischen diesen Göttern und den Menschen walten nach der Anschauung aller Religionen enge Beziehungen, die den sozialen Verbindungen zwischen den Menschen ähnlich sind. Bald stehen sich Götter und Menschen gegenüber wie Herren und Knechte — so in den älteren semitischen Religionen, bald wie Freunde — so im Griechentum, bald wie Vater und Kind — so im Christentum. Diese

Gemeinschaft wird von den Religionen von der Seite der Götter eröffnet gedacht. Ihnen kommt die Initiative des Verkehrs mit dem Menschen zu. Zeus raunt in den heiligen Eichen von Dodona, Jahve spricht im Gewitter, der christliche Gott redet in Propheten und zuletzt in seinem Sohn. Die Gottheit offenbart sich und zwar tut sie das zu dem doppelten Zweck, daß sie den Menschen ihren Willen und ihre Ansprüche kundtut, aber auch die Menschen durch entsprechende Handlungen fördert und heilt, wie straft und verdammt. — Von Seiten des Menschen wird der göttlichen Offenbarung eine Antwort gegeben und zwar durch den Kultus. In umfassendem Sinn verstanden, umschließt dieser Begriff nicht nur die zeremoniellen Handlungen in Opfer, Lied, Gebet, sondern auch die innere, gläubige Zuwendung zum Göttlichen, wie die gesamte Lebenshingabe, in welcher ein Mensch sein Handeln an dem Willen der Gottheit orientiert und sein gesamtes Schicksal von ihr abhängig macht. Erst aus dem Kultus entsteht der Mythos, das heißt die Erzählung vom Wesen und Wirken der Götter in der Ewigkeit und in der Geschichte; aus der religiösen Erfüllung der göttlichen Gebote erwächst die Sittlichkeit. Die eigentlich religiöse Haltung gegenüber der Gottheit ist die rezeptiv abhängige. Wo der Mensch in der Zauberei sich mächtiger dünkt als die Gottheit und diese magisch in seinen Dienst zwingen will, liegt eine durch und durch irreligiöse Haltung vor, wie gewiß auch in der tatsächlichen Religionsgeschichte Kultus oft in Magie übergegangen ist. Zieht man die letzten Erörterungen über das Wesen der Religion zusammen, so ergibt sich als drittes Merkmal: **Religion ist eine durch Offenbarung begründete, durch Kultus erwiderte Verkehrsgemeinschaft der Gottheit mit der Menschheit.** Der objektiv-empirische Weg ergibt mithin das einfache Resultat, Religion ist Verkehr des Menschen mit Gott — eine Wesensbestimmung, die auch auf das Christentum zutrifft, so gewiß dieses auch allen den einzelnen Merkmalen, wie dem der Offenbarung, des Kultus, der Gottheit und Menschheit dazu noch besondre charakteristische Merkmale gibt.

Die subjektive Eigenart der religiösen Vorgänge läßt sich nicht dadurch feststellen, daß man sie einem der drei sogenannten Seelenvermögen ausschließlich oder vornehmlich zuweist. So hatte die alte Orthodoxie und der Rationalismus die religiöse Funktion wesentlich im Denken, Schleiermacher dagegen im Fühlen, Kant und die Ritschelsche Schule im Handeln gefunden. Dieses Verfahren ist schon dadurch ausgeschlossen, daß die moderne Psychologie die unauflösliche Verbundenheit aller drei Funktionen in jedem seelischen Akt kennen gelernt hat. Darum lehrt die Beobachtung, daß jede religiöse Seelenregung Verstand, Gemüt und Wille in Mitleidenschaft zieht, wenn auch bald das eine oder andre Element in

stärkerem Maße. Immer ist bei religiösem Erleben, irgendein Gedanke, mag er auch noch so undeutlich sein, an Gott vorhanden, stets wird das Gemüt mit Lust oder Unlustbewegungen gegenüber dem Heiligen erfüllt; immer sucht der Wille, entsprechend Gottes Willen oder gegen diesen sich zu betätigen.

Auch die Eigenart der inneren subjektiven Religiosität im Unterschied zu andern Seelenregungen, wird nur deutlich bei Berücksichtigung der Objekte, durch die sie angeregt werden und durch die sie sich dauernd bestimmt fühlen. Auch das religiöse Seelenleben gewinnt in seiner regelmäßigen Form seinen Inhalt nur auf dem Weg sinnlicher Erfahrung, das heißt durch die Aufnahme von Eindrücken der Außenwelt und deren innere Verarbeitung. Sie schließt sich sowohl an an Natureindrücke wie Sonnenaufgang und -untergang, an die Beobachtung geschichtlicher Ereignisse, Notzeiten des Volkes, aber sie erwächst auch durch das Gehör von Worten. Aber alle diese Erscheinungen nimmt der religiöse Mensch nicht nur als Objekte und Geschehnisse der irdischen Sinnenwelt auf, sondern er erlebt sie als Träger und Vermittler übersinnlicher Wirklichkeit. Auch das innere Leben ist religiös nur dann und so weit, als es mit seinem Denken, Fühlen, Wollen Gott und das Heilige als Ausgang und Zielpunkt erfaßt. Diese Erfassung trägt zunächst den Charakter der Rezeptivität, sie nimmt die Offenbarung hin, sie läßt sich Gebote geben, sie wird zur Freude und zur Trauer bewegt. Mit einem Wort ist die religiöse Seelenhaltung Glaube, Hinnahme Gottes mit allen seelischen Kräften. Erst aus dieser rezeptiven Haltung entwickelt sich eine aktive, die sich nun ihrerseits Gott zu nähern und ihm etwas zu geben sucht, sei es äußere Objekte, wie in dem Opferkultus der Religionen oder Herz und Willen wie im Christentum. In ihrer höchsten Verklärung nennen wir diese Haltung Liebe. **Das innere religiöse Leben hat mithin seine charakteristischen Merkmale darin, daß es Glaube und Liebe zu Gott ist.**

Die Richtigkeit dieser Wesensbestimmung der subjektiven Religion ergibt ein hier nur kurz durchzuführender Vergleich mit den seelischen Betätigungen, die andern Gebieten des geistigen Lebens zugrunde liegen. Für das wissenschaftliche Erkennen sind die äußerlich wahrgenommenen Objekte dieser Welt Selbstzweck und ihre Beschreibung bleibt bei ihrer innerweltlichen Erklärung. Für die Religiosität dagegen sind sie nur Mittel, um eine Gottesberührung zu erleben. Von der humanen sittlichen Betätigung mit ihren innerweltlichen Idealen unterscheidet sich die Religion sowohl durch die überweltlichen Zwecke, die sie annimmt, wie durch die Kraft der Erfüllung, die sie von Gott kommen läßt. Selbst von den idealsten Kunstempfindungen unterscheidet sich die Religiosität. Denn die Kunst, solange sie reine Kunst bleibt, geht nicht in eine

wirkliche Transzendenz über, während für den religiösen Menschen, das Transzendente Ausgangs- und Zielpunkt ist, das nicht wie bei der Kunst in schönen Empfindungen genossen, sondern gläubig empfangen und sittlich befolgt sein will. Religiosität ist die gläubige und liebende Bezogenheit der ganzen Seele auf Gott. Verbindet man die Ergebnisse der objektiven religionsgeschichtlichen Beobachtung mit der subjektiven religionspsychologischen Analyse so kann man abschließend das Wesen der Religion definieren: **Religion ist durch Offenbarung und Glaube sich vollziehende Verkehrsgemeinschaft Gottes mit dem Menschen.**

II.

Der Wert der Religion.

Für den religiösen Menschen erscheint die Religion als der höchste Lebenswert, der alle irdischen Lebenswerte überwiegt und diese erst in abgestuftem Maß zu wertvollen Erscheinungen erhebt. Von der Religion erwartet der Mensch theoretisch die Befriedigung seiner tiefsten Wahrheitsansprüche, in seinem Gemüt die Befreiung von allem Leid und positiv die stärkste Beseeligung. Für seinen Willen erhofft er von ihr die Erschließung seiner höchsten Ziele und zugleich die Kraft ihrer Erreichung. Den positiven Wert der Religion hat der Psalmist in dem Bekenntnis zu Ausdruck gebracht: „Wenn ich nur dich habe, frage ich nichts nach Himmel und Erde" und mehr negativ gewandt Augustin, daß unsre Seele unruhig ist, bis sie in Gott ruht. Für diese subjektive Bewertung der Religion lassen sich eine Reihe objektiver Beobachtungen zur Unterstützung anführen und zugleich eine Anzahl entgegenstehender Einwendungen gegen den Wert der Religion widerlegen.

Der äußerliche Maßstab, um den Wert einer Sache festzustellen, ist räumliche Größe und zeitliche Ausdehnung. Ein Volk, das viele Jahrtausende besteht und ein gewaltiges Stück Erde unter seiner Herrschaft hat, erscheint bedeutender als ein junger Stamm, der auf schmalem Land lebt! Auf die Religion angewandt, spricht für ihren Wert, ihre zeitliche und räumliche Ausdehnung in der Welt und in der Geschichte. Vergeblich haben die Gegner der Religion sich immer wieder um den Nachweis bemüht, daß es religionslose Völker gibt und religionslose Zeiten in der Geschichte bestanden haben. Exakte Forschung aber hat vielmehr in ersterer Richtung gezeigt, daß scheinbar religionslose Völker entweder aus Scheu fremden Reisenden nichts von ihren religiösen Vorstellungen und Bräuchen bekundet haben, oder daß Missionare zu hohe Maßstäbe an die betreffenden Religionen gelegt und zwar mit Recht dem Christentum verwandte Religiosität vermißt, mit Unrecht aber jegliche Religiosität geleugnet haben. Es gibt in der Tat kein Volk,

in dem nicht Religion vorhanden wäre. In zweiter Richtung hat gerade die neuere Forschung gezeigt, wie selbst die ältesten, uns erreichbaren Menschen nach ihren Begräbnisgebräuchen und Zeichnungen in uralten Höhlen schon religiöse Vorstellungen gehabt haben müssen. Auch die Behauptung, daß im Lauf der Geschichte die Religion immer mehr an Ausdehnung in der Menschheit verliere, trifft nicht zu. Vielmehr sind Versuche, ein ganzes Volk religionslos zu machen, wie etwa in der französischen Revolution bisher immer wieder gescheitert. Umgekehrt sind eine ganze Reihe religiöser und antireligiöser Strömungen wie der Buddhismus, der Positivismus eines Comte, Monismus und Sozialismus immer wieder der Religion sehr nahe gekommen oder haben sogar direkt religiöse Vorstellungen und Bräuche wieder übernommen. Steht es aber so, dann führt die Anwendung des zeiträumlichen Maßstabes auf die Religion zu einem günstigen Vorurteil für ihren Wert. **Auf keinen Fall kann die Religion eine willkürliche, auf die Erfindung einzelner Menschen zurückgehende Erscheinung sein. Sie ist vielmehr eine allgemeine Menschheitssache und zu allen Zeiten und an allen Orten vorhanden.**

Die Religion besitzt eine ganz besondre Lebenskraft. Sie ist eine der stärksten und erregendsten Mächte in der Geschichte gewesen und ist es bis heute noch. Wie viele Menschen hat sie begeistert. Wieviele Völker unter ihre Fahnen gesammelt! Wie hat der Kampf um die Religion die Massen ergriffen! Es gibt aber auch keins der verschiedenen Kulturgebiete, das die Religion nicht irgendwie befruchtet hätte. Wissenschaft und religiöse Welterkenntnis gingen in alten Tagen fast ineinander über und manches wissenschaftliche Problem ist zunächst von der Religion gestellt worden. Fast alle Gattungen der Kunst haben durch die Religion Anregungen gefunden, die Baukunst nicht minder wie die Malerei und besonders die Musik bis in unsre Tage. Die sittliche Gesetzgebung der Staaten ist zunächst überall religiös fundamentiert gewesen. Gewiß sind die einen oder andern Anregungen der Religion in der neueren Zeit immer indirekter geworden, je mehr sich nicht nur die Kultur verselbständigt hat, sondern sich auch die Religion immer bestimmter auf ihre eigentliche Aufgabe, die Pflege des Gottesverhältnisses, besonnen hat. Aber in der letzten Tiefe und in vielen Persönlichkeiten dauern auch heute noch die wertvollen Wirkungen der Religion in der Sphäre der Kultur fort.

Aber wendet man ein: **Die Religion habe der Kultur noch mehr geschadet als genützt.** Man erinnert etwa an die Schwierigkeiten, welche religiöses Dogma der modernen Naturwissenschaft bei der Neugestaltung unsers Weltbildes von Galilei an in den Weg gelegt hat. Oder man erinnert daran, zu welchen grotesken Ver-

zerrungen in der Darstellung von Göttern die Religion die Kunst gezwungen habe und wie sie sich aller Wandlung in künstlerischem Stil hemmend in den Weg gestellt habe. Wie hat nicht die Rechtspflege durch die Inquisition und ihre Methoden gelitten! Diese Tatbestände der empirischen Religions- und Kirchengeschichte können und sollen nicht geleugnet, ja nicht einmal verkleinert werden, sondern müssen in ihrer furchtbaren Tatsächlichkeit stehen gelassen und gerade von christlicher Seite aufs tiefste bedauert und verurteilt werden. Aber trotzdem sind sie nicht geeignet, den Wert der Religion überhaupt herabzusetzen. **Denn alle diese Schädigungen ergeben sich nicht aus dem Wesen der Religion,** der Verkehrsgemeinschaft von Gott und Mensch, sondern widersprechen ihr aufs Schärfste. Weil mit Recht der Satz gilt: „corruptio optimi pessima," ist jede Verderbnis der Religion eine besonders schlimme und in die Augen fallende. Aber genau so ist es auf andern Gebieten auch gegangen. Die Geschichte der Wissenschaft strotzt von Irrtümern, ja Dummheiten, die Sittengeschichte von Verfehlungen, ja Perversitäten, die Kunstgeschichte von Häßlichkeiten. Niemandem aber wird es einfallen, um deswillen den Wert der Kunst, der Wissenschaft und Sittlichkeit an sich zu verwerfen. Dann unterlasse man aber auch dieses Verfahren der Religion gegenüber. Man lehne so schroff wie irgend möglich die mit der Religion empirisch verbundenen Schädigungen ab, aber man erkenne zugleich an, daß diese mit dem Wesen der Religion nichts zu tun haben. **Die Religion ist nicht nur in ihrer eigenen Sphäre, sondern auch in allen Kulturgebieten eine wertschaffende Macht.**

Wirklich über den Wert der Religion entscheiden kann aber nur der religiöse Mensch selbst, der sie tatsächlich erlebt. Er bestimmt ihn positiv dahin, daß er das Leben erhöht, negativ dahin, daß er es von allen Hemmungen befreit. In der menschlichen Natur liegt der Trieb, ein höchstes Gut zu gewinnen, das über allen andern Gütern liegt und wirklich dauernd befriedigt. Der Mensch versucht es zunächst mit innerweltlichen Gütern, mit dem Erstreben und Besitz von Ehre, Familie, Vaterland, Menschheitsdienst und Menschenliebe. Das alles sind mehr oder minder hohe Werte. Aber einmal ist nicht einzusehen, warum ich die Förderung des Nächsten über die meiner eigenen Persönlichkeit stellen soll, warum die Menschheit mehr als das Vaterland gelten soll. Sodann aber füllen alle diese Ziele den innersten Bedarf der Seele doch nicht aus; darum wechselt der einzelne Mensch und erst recht die Menschheit so häufig in der Meinung über das, was sie erstreben soll. Diese Schwierigkeiten werden behoben, wenn Gott zum höchsten Gut in der Religion wird. Denn es ist deutlich, daß eine überweltliche höchste Macht an Rang und Größe allen innerweltlichen

Werten übergeordnet ist und diesen erst die rechte Abstufung ihrer Werte gibt. Gott allein befriedigt aber auch wirklich und dauernd, da in ihm alle denkbaren Werte geborgen sind und sich keine Gabe vorstellen läßt, die er nicht in seinen Händen hielte und schenken könnte. Mit Recht haben Psychologen wie etwa Schopenhauer darauf hingewiesen, daß vollkommene Befriedigung eines Triebes diesen stillstellt, Langeweile und Ueberdruß erzeugt, so wie ein ganz gesättigter Magen den Menschen faul macht, ja vielleicht Ekel erregt. Die Eigentümlichkeit des religiösen Gutes aber ist es, daß es zwar befriedigt und doch nicht übersättigt, daß es Ruhe schenkt, aber das weitere Streben nicht stille stellt. Denn das von der Religion vermittelte Gut ist einerseits schon vorhanden, indem es schon in der Gegenwart wahre Gottesgemeinschaft durch Offenbarung und Glauben schenkt. Anderseits aber ist noch nicht erschienen, was wir sein werden. Gott hat sich noch nicht völlig offenbart, hat seine Gabe noch nicht restlos verschenkt, darum wird aus Glaube Hoffnung und Hoffnung erhält den Menschen lebendig im weiteren Streben. **Der Wert der Religion besteht in der Befriedigung wie in der Erhaltung des menschlichen Verlangens nach einem höchsten Gut.**

Nicht minder groß, ja vielfach allein beobachtet ist der Dienst der Religion für die Aufhebung und Ertragung menschlicher Lebenshemmungen. Jeder Mensch erfährt in der Welt mehr oder minder starke Einschränkungen seiner Wünsche und zwar nicht nur seiner unberechtigten, sondern auch seiner berechtigten. Er möchte seinem Volk dienen, aber gerade dieses will seine besten Leistungen nicht annehmen; er will helfen, aber eigene Krankheit hindert ihn daran. Leid wird jedem Menschen in reicher Fülle zu teil. Hier aber greift die Religion ein und beweist ihren Wert. Durch die Verbindung mit Gott, der stärker ist wie alle innerweltlichen Hemmungen, gewinnt der Mensch einen Bundesgenossen, der auch ihn mächtiger macht als jene, mit Luther gesprochen zu einem freien Herrn aller Dinge. Diese religiöse Herrschaft über Leid und Not, Hemmung und Angst, kann sich in verschiedener Form auswirken. Einmal kann die göttliche Hilfe die Hemmungen auch empirisch beseitigen. In der Kraft Gottes steht der Kranke auf, wandelt und tut seinen Dienst. Auf das Gebet hin bekehrt sich ein Volk und unterwirft sich der prophetischen Zucht. Furcht und Angst vor Schicksalsschlägen schwinden tatsächlich in der Seele des Frommen. Aber es gibt auch andre Formen religiöser Hilfe. Die göttliche Welt bewirkt eine weitgehende Umwertung aller Werte. Das Leid, das bisher schwerstes Unglück zu sein schien, erscheint jetzt als Erziehungsmittel, als Förderung des wahren Lebens der Seele; der Kampf ängstigt nicht mehr, sondern stählt die inneren Kräfte.

Gott stärkt die Widerstandskraft des Menschen. Trägt eine Säule zu schwer an der Last des auf ihr ruhenden Gebälkes, so kann nicht nur dessen Gewicht vermindert werden, sondern es kann auch die Tragkraft der Säule durch Verstärkung so vermehrt werden, daß sie fortan ihre Last spielend trägt. So kann auch Gottesgemeinschaft Menschen so stark machen, daß sie allen Widerwärtigkeiten des Lebens gegenüber gewachsen bleiben. Bringt aber nicht das Leid, sondern die Schuld tiefste Not über den Menschen, erscheinen die sittlichen Konflikte mit sich selbst, mit andern und zuhöchst mit Gott als die schwersten, die am meisten quälenden, so bringt gerade die Religion hier die stärkste Hilfe. Sie enthält wenigstens in ihren höhren Formen den Vergebungsgedanken, die Gewißheit, daß Gott alle Schuld auslöschen kann und will, daß er auch die Kraft gibt zu einem neuen Lebenswandel; die Religion bringt Versöhnung, Erlösung, Erneuerung. **Der Wert der Religion ergibt sich am deutlichsten für den Menschen, der sie erlebt. Sie schenkt ihm Lebenserhöhung, indem sie ihn mit dem höchsten Gut verbindet, sie befreit ihn von allen Lebenshemmungen, dem Leid und der Schuld.**

Zur Anbahnung von Seelenerkenntnis zur Seelenleitung

Von T. Kugler.

Im Septemberheft des „Magazins," Seite 361 ff., resultiert Prof. Dr. R. H. Grützmacher mit Recht, daß nur kritischer Realismus das religiöse Erkennen tatsächlich fördert, indem jener durch strenge Selbstzucht den Glauben anleitet, subjektive Zutaten von religiöser Wirklichkeit zu lösen und ihn eben damit erst befähigt, göttliche Realität durch eine entsprechende wissenschaftliche Theorie zu fassen. Das **Erzielen religiöser Wirklichkeit** ist das große „desiderandum" vor allem auch auf dem Gebiet der Seelsorge, wo durch Außerachtlassen dieser unentbehrlichen Richtlinie bereits so viel versäumt wurde und noch mehr auf dem Spiel steht. Um zugleich mit dem Titel eines bedeutsamen Werkes des heimgegangenen Külpe zu reden, bedarf die Arbeitsmethode gar vieler Seelsorger dringend einer „Realisierung." Einer gewissen Art Seelsorge haben sich freilich auch Forscher gewidmet, die nicht direkt christlich oder religiös interessiert sind. Ihre Methoden und Ergebnisse sind uns aber doch beachtenswert, da sie nicht nur brauchbare Hilfsmittel, sondern teils auch erwünschte Ergänzungen der üblichen kirchlichen Seelsorge bieten, deren Grund und Ziel ja dadurch nicht im mindesten verrückt zu werden braucht.

Das unerreichbare Ideal kann ja für einen evangelischen Seelsorger nur er sein, welcher spricht: Ich bin der Weg, die Wahrheit und das Leben. Aber auch die übrigen Worte, in denen er göttliche Autorität beansprucht, gehören so unbedingt zum Ganzen seines unvergleichbaren Lebensbildes, daß, wer sie, die Geist und Leben sind, unterschlagen wollte, des Frevels am Heiligsten schuldig würde. Dem ewigen Vater entstammt und Mensch geworden, bietet sich hier in ihm das Urbild unsrer Bestimmung; uns zur beständigen, heilenden, erneuernden Berührung. Was „dreimal heilig" bedeutet, haben Wahrheitsforscher an ihm erkannt und wurden von diesem **Lichtbild ohne Schatten** so dauernd gefesselt, daß ihr ganzes Wesen in ihm aufging, etliche schließlich selbst seine Narbenmale aufwiesen.

Sein Hirtenbild ist es, das jedem aufrichtigen Seelsorger vor allem vorschwebt. Wie er die einzelnen Seelen in Liebestreue sucht, ihnen nachgeht, voll zartester Schonung und hingebender Teilnahme ihnen begegnet; ihre Leidesnöte nicht außer acht läßt, immer aber das Ziel der Seelenheilung unentwegt verfolgt, das vor allem ist jedem Seelsorger maßgebend.

Was jedoch dem geisterleuchteten Blicke Jesu dabei offen lag,

können wir freilich nur teilweise durch fleißige Vorarbeit und treues, geduldiges Erforschen des Gemüts unsrer Pfleglinge erringen; weshalb wir auch alle ehrliche einschlägige Arbeit andrer Gebiete als Mitarbeit und Hilfsmittel dankbar sollten willkommen heißen. Allerdings von der **persönlichen Stellung zu ihm,** dem Gottmenschen, hängt schließlich für uns und unsre Pfleglinge aller Segen, jeder bleibende Erfolg unsers Strebens ab. Seiner Person und seinem Heilsprogramm gegenüber muß letztendlich jeder sich entscheiden.

So mehren sich ja auch, besonders seit der Nachkriegszeit, jene dreisten Stimmen, die das makellose Bild des ganz Heiligen damit in den Staub ziehen, daß sie ihn nur den Idealmenschen nennen. Wer aber an seiner **Wesenseinheit mit Gott** rüttelt, macht ihn zum Lügner oder irrenden Schwärmer. Daß er, wie etliche meinen, doch unser Erlöser bleibt, auch wenn er in etlichen prophetischen Aussagen irrte, ist bei ihm, der auch als Menschensohn die innigste Verbindung mit dem Vater beständig aufrecht erhielt, einfach undenkbar; oder etwa daß seine Jünger betreffs seiner leiblichen Auferstehung sich täuschten, die sie aller Verfolgung zum Trotz, nebst seinem Erlösertod unentwegt bezeugten. Nur dann können auch wir unser Zeugen- und Hirtenamt recht ausrichten, wenn wir weder an der Person des ewigen Hirten noch an seinen Worten Abstriche vornehmen.

Der Zeitgeist freilich spendet denen Beifall, die Falschmünzerei treiben und das offene Bekenntnis zur Gottheit Christi umschleichen, wohl aus Scheu vor dem hochzeitlichen Kleid, das sie für entbehrlich halten. Für zeitgemäß gilt ja, entscheidenden Prinzipien und Gewissensforderungen gegenüber neutral zu sein. Der am Kreuz für uns gestorbene Herr erwartet aber von seinen Knechten, daß sie in allem „mit ihm" sind, also wie er für die Wahrheit offen Stellung nehmen; gewiß auch dem heute wieder modernen Friederufen gegenüber, wo doch kein Friede ist, sondern nur Bangen um den gemachten Raub.

An der modernen Menschheit und meist weltseligen Christenheit Seelsorge üben, das erfordert Geist und Gesinnung eines Predigers in der Wüste und den rastlosen Eifer heiliger Geduld eines Paulus. Die überfüllten Verkehrsstraßen und die leeren Kirchenbänke bezeugen es. Auto, Film und Radio binden den heutigen Menschen an alle wechselnden Zeitströmungen. Durch mehr oder weniger religiös zugeschnittene Logen und Vereine verkehrt er mit Leuten aller Ansichten und Richtungen; so daß nur zu **viele meinen, die Kirche habe sich überlebt,** da reichlich Ersatz für sie da ist. Unzureichende Mittel ließen jene Versuche wohl zumeist mißglücken, wo man hoffte, unter kirchlicher Aufsicht mit Theatern und anderm

konkurrieren zu können. Das gerade Gegenteil mag man damit erreicht und einen Teil der Jugend der Kirche entfremdet haben. Daß vielfach auch das notwendige Beispiel der Eltern fehlt, die es an Kirchgang und christlichem Geist im Hause bitter fehlen lassen, kommt noch dazu als höchst bedenkliche Tatsache. „Last but not least," auch das Verhalten von Pastoren hat dazu beigetragen, daß viele ihre **Verbindung mit der Gemeinde gelockert** oder gelöst haben. Geschah das, indem die Betreffenden jenen unter christlicher Fahne freibeuternden Sekten zufielen, so machte es sich um ungefestigte Gemüter handeln, die vielleicht aus verwandtschaftlichen[1] oder spekulativen Geschäftsgründen handelten. In andern Fällen aber wird jeder dadurch berührte Geistliche zu ernster Selbstprüfung Anlaß finden, sobald er zugibt, daß die Art seiner Seelsorge irgendwie Einfluß auf die Gliedschaft an der Gemeinde und den Kirchenbesuch ausübe.

Doch siehe, ein Großer im Reich der mächtig ziehenden Wandel-bilder erhebt seine Stimme, um dem religiösen Sinn des Volkes wieder „auf die Beine zu helfen." Herr William Fox nämlich hat berechnet, daß von den fünfzehn Millionen Sitzplätzen in den Kirchen unsers Landes nur fünfzehn Prozent besetzt sind. Um diese krasse Lücke zu füllen, gelte es nur das neuerdings auch stimmbegabte Wandelbild in jeder Kirche einzugliedern, um das Leben der großen religiösen Führer recht anschaulich darzustellen. Dann würden alle Plätze von solchen gefüllt, die als religiöse Menschen zugleich auch bessere Bürger würden.

Als praktische Antwort zur stehenden Frage, wie die leeren Bänke zu füllen sind, verdient dieser Plan in modifizierter Weise erprobt zu werden. Doch ist zu befürchten, daß selbst bei allgemeiner Durchführbarkeit lange Jahre darüber verstreichen. Während dieses Interims aber dürfte der Zustand an säumigen Orten sich noch verschlechtern, eben durch die verstärkte Attraktion benachbarter filmbegabter Kirchen. Ob jedoch mittelst verstärkter und betonter Anschaulichkeit **der beschauliche Sinn** der Leute mehr vertieft oder gar verflacht würde, läßt sich wohl auch erst nach Erprobung beurteilen. Die rechte Abhilfe wird doch wohl der lokale Geistliche selbst zu finden haben. Zunächst könnte er durch Rücksprache mit verschiedenartigen Kirchgängern festzustellen suchen, inwieweit er es nicht erreichte, dem **Verständnis und Bedürfnis seiner Hörer** Rechnung zu tragen; ja er wird vor allem auch nachprüfen

[1]) In Süd-Illinois fielen drei Familien den Pentekostals zu, weil ein Apostel der genannten in die eine hinein heiratete, in der andern ein Anhänger der Sekte als naher Verwandter sich heimisch machte und die dritte Familie mit der zweiten verschwägert ist.

müssen, ob er ihre Gesinnung und Handlungsweise überhaupt recht beurteilt und demgemäß als Lehrer und Seelsorger einsichtsvoll gewirkt hat.

Da nun das, was ohne jene Prämissen nicht denkbar, nämlich jener so **notwendige seelische Kontakt** zwischen Seelsorger und Gliedern tatsächlich vielfach mangelt, soll im Folgenden versucht werden, der Ursache dieses Mangels nachzugehen, um demgemäß einen Weg der Abhilfe anzubahnen. Solches möge geschehen aufgrund der Fragen:

1. Wodurch mögen Seelsorger Halt und Führung bei vielen eingebüßt haben?

2. Wie mag das lockere oder gelöste Band wieder zu festigen und eine sachliche Leitung anzubahnen sein?

1. Warum Geistliche so vielfach ihren Einfluß eingebüßt haben, das wurde schon so oft erörtert, daß jedes weitere Eingehen darauf sich scheinbar erübrigt. Weil aber bisher **keine allseitig befriedigende Abhilfe** erzielt wurde, bildet jene Frage noch heute das stehende Problem so manches Seelsorgers. Darum sollen nun die folgenden Ausführungen auf ein angemessenes Verfahren hinzielen, das dem Geistlichen förderlich wäre, den Seelen in beratender Führung wirksam zu dienen. Seelsorge in umfassendem Sinne zu treiben, erfordert ja nicht nur ein wachsames, richtig beobachtendes Auge, sondern auch ein erfahrungsgemäßes Eindringen in jenen geheimnisvollen Zusammenhang, in dem Leib und Seele des Menschen stehen. Manchem mag solche Gabe verliehen sein; doch gehört es mit zur Hirtenaufgabe, das möglichst zu ersetzen, was uns daran mangelt. Damit ist auch dies eingeschlossen, daß wir in gewissen pathologischen Fällen, wenn ein geeigneter Arzt sich findet, im Einverständnis mit diesem handeln. In Krankheit haben wir es doch schon meist auch an uns selbst erfahren, wie übermächtig ein gebrechlicher Leib unser Seelenleben in Mitleidenschaft zieht; wie ideal wäre es also, wenn in solchen Fällen unsrer Praxis **Seelsorger und Arzt Hand in Hand** arbeiten könnten? In denkwürdigem Gegensatz zu mancher sogenannten christlichen oder religiösen Gemeinschaft, die das Ziel leiblicher Heilung auf ihre Fahne schrieb, hat die neuzeitliche medizinische Heilkunde es ja unternommen, auf dem Weg der Seelenheilung komplizierte Krankheitserscheinungen zu beheben, weil derart besonders günstigen Erfolg versprechend. Gewiß sollte also ein beruflicher Seelsorger nicht weniger bereit sein, neuere Hilfsmittel zu erproben, wo solche ihm zur Förderung sich erbieten; zumal das Hirtenamt wohl zu allen Zeiten Vertreter von hohem Eifer aufwies. Die Geschichte kirchlicher Seelsorge bietet in reicher Fülle Beispiele von treuen hingebenden Hirten, die in heiligem Pflichtgefühl auch in Zeiten von

Seuchen und Verfolgung bei ihrer Herde ausharrten. Ohne solche wahre Hirtenliebe will freilich auch die beste Vorbildung zur Seelsorge und Seelenkunde nur wenig besagen. Um aber der heutigen Aufgabe gewachsen zu sein, das erfordert außer entsprechenden Vorkenntnissen auch ein sorgfältiges Nachprüfen noch andrer einschlägiger Methoden und günstiger Ergebnisse auf verwandten Gebieten wissenschaftlichen Forschens. Wenn heute ein Geistlicher nicht derart **universal interessiert** ist, daß er eigene und fremde Erfahrung, Vorschläge, Wege und Methoden, von zuverlässiger Seite kommend, auf ihren Wert oder Unwert für sein Gebiet hin prüft, so wird er seiner Aufgabe schwerlich ganz gerecht. Es wäre ein **verhängnisvoller Irrtum,** wenn er meinte, an seinem Vorstudium oder gelegentlichen eigenen Erfahrungen wie an einem ausreichenden Betriebskapital dauernd zehren zu können. Wo jener undefinierbare, doch unerläßliche Rapport zwischen Hirten und Herde geschwunden, kann es unmöglich als Ersatz gelten, wenn die Gemeinde sich in fast selbständige und sich selbst rekrutierende Vereine und Gesellschaften aufgelöst hat. Daß aber eben jene psychische Fühlung in bedeutendem Umfang abnimmt und sich auch durch außerordentliche Anstrengungen nur selten erneuern läßt, das eben ist der bedrohliche Tatbestand, den weite kirchliche Kreise offen anerkennen und dem baldigst abzuhelfen das dringendste Problem heutiger Seelsorge bildet.

Wie aber stellen trotzdem zahlreiche Seelenhirten dieser Lage sich gegenüber? Etliche derart, als lebten sie in einer andern Welt und hörten und wüßten gar wenig von dem, was rings um sie her vorgeht. Manche werden es kaum gewahr, daß und warum selbst ihre eigenen Gemeindeglieder allen möglichen sektiererischen Richtungen zulaufen, die unter religiöser Flagge **dem natürlichen Sinn Rechnung tragen,** durch angebliches Gesundbeten, Gesunddenken, methodisch erzieltes Einwohnen des Heiligen Geistes, selbst ohne den von Simon Magus gebotenen Kaufpreis und durch ähnliche sinnverwirrende Programme. Wenn aber doch viele Kirchen immer leerer, während die großen amerikanischen Wettrenn- und Wettflugkarawanen immer gedrängter und länger werden, können wir uns dann noch immer zufrieden geben, wenn nur **die nationale Narkose** anhält, durch die tonangebenden religiösen Redner verabfolgt, die nur Gutes und Besseres in all dem zerfahrenen, sittlosen Treiben des Volkes sehen wollen? Einem wachen Hirten haben erstens die entleerten Kirchen der Liberalen Deutschlands bewiesen, daß keine Predigt von unbiblischen Zuschnitt die Hörer dauernd fesselt, sondern nur die lebendige, zeitgemäße Predigt des biblischen Evangeliums, **das persönliche Zeugnis,** das ihn in den Mittelpunkt stellt. Zum andern aber wird jenem bewußt geworden sein,

daß zeitgemäße Handhabung der privaten Seelsorge einer notwendigen Ergänzung bedarf.

Leider gibt es ja heute noch Seelenhirten, deren sittliche Bewertung ihres Nächsten sich kaum weiter erstreckt, als auf jenes kindliche Urteil, das nur auf entweder gut oder böse lautet. Schreiber kann es nicht vergessen, wie ein Geistlicher ihm erst mehrere schlimme Eigenheiten eines Gliedes aufzählte, um dann mit dem Fazit zu schließen, im Grund ist er aber doch eine liebe gute treue Seele! — Wer solch exzentrische Bahnen wandelt, verfehlt auf ihnen den wirklichen Menschen, um seine Künste an selbstkonstruierten Wesen zu erproben, die nur in der Einbildung oder im Winkel eines weltfremden Sonderlings ihr Schattendasein fristen. Ob das nicht allzulange schon öfter der Fall war? Ob nicht auch treumeinende Hirten, bei aller Sorgfalt, mit der sie den Seelen nachgingen, doch den rechten Weg der Seelenleitung mitunter verfehlten? Ob nicht manche gar nach Art moderner Schwarmgeister zu viel spiritualisierten und das notwendige konkrete Fundament verflüchtigten?

Wohl ist ja verklärte Leiblichkeit das Ziel der Wege Gottes, noch aber stehen wir mit den übrigen Geschöpfen, mit unverklärten Gebeinen auf dem Boden der alten Erde. Demnach haben wir auch die Menschen unsrer Zeit, wie sie wirklich sind, sachgemäß zu beurteilen; also auch ihre animalische Seite, die Graf Keyserling als die bei uns Amerikanern gefährlich vorwiegende erkannt hat. In seelsorgerlicher Unterredung, wie auch im Konfirmandenunterricht, dürfen wir nie den **Boden der Wirklichkeit** unter den Füßen verlieren. Sonst schweben wir mit unsern Ausführungen in der Luft, und die von uns geleiteten mögen samt unsrer bodenlosen Methode zu Fall kommen. Hiermit soll durchaus nicht etwa einer materialistischen Auffassung das Wort geredet werden, wohl aber darauf gedrungen, daß wir der Menschheit unsrer Zeit wirkliche Berater und Führer seien, die sie seelisch höher heben, aber so, daß wir den notwendigen Zusammenhang der Dinge, das Verbundensein mit gegenwärtiger Zeit und Welt nicht außer acht lassen. Sonst möchte die Art unsrer religiösen Unterweisung diese selbst illusorisch machen. Das geschieht da, wo wir als Seelsorger Erwachsenen oder Konfirmanden und sonst der Jugend gegenüber nicht sachlich und zeitgemäß vorgehen oder bei ihnen nicht auf selbständiges Fragen und Antworten, also **eigenes religiöses Denken** bestehen. Auch die Art andrer Kirchen und der heutigen Sekten sollte durchaus allen religiös Angeregten gegenüber von uns aus eine sachliche Beurteilung finden; da eben dies den ungesuchtesten Anlaß bietet, auf die für das persönliche und das Gemeindeleben wichtigsten Fragen einzugehen.

Und die Predigt, die doch das bedeutendste Mittel der Seelsorge in weiterem Kreise bildet? Nun, an guten Vorbildern und Hilfsmitteln fehlt es ja hier so wenig, daß jeder Hirte imstande sein sollte, seine eigene Art danach zu prüfen und zu vervollkommnen und zwar derart, daß jeder Hörer ihn womöglich verstehe und doch auch der Gelehrte und der Schulprinzipal dabei zu ihrer Rechnung kommen. Bedenken wir, wie heute der Unglaube unter alt und jung eine ausgedehnte dreiste Propaganda betreibt, so wird schon dem gegenüber kein treuer Seelsorger es an ernstlichem Bemühen fehlen lassen, auch diesem alten Feind in gut gerüsteter, möglichst schlagfertiger Weise zu begegnen.

Wie wichtig ist doch in all diesen Fällen sachgemäße, zielbewußte seelsorgerliche **Unterredung mit den Einzelnen,** welche die Predigt ergänzt oder für sie zubereitet! Daß dem Seelenhirten ohne gleichen der Wert der einzelnen Seele unvergleichlich hoch stand, beweisen nicht nur Jesu diesbezüglichen Aussagen, sondern auch jene Unterredungen mit einzelnen, die Johannes so ausführlich berichtet. Erkennen wir die Echtheit der Schlußverse seines Evangeliums an, so könnten auch jene Gespräche als etliche Beispiele für noch viele andre gelten und wir dürfen annehmen, daß Jesus auf solche private Seelsorge ebensoviel oder noch viel mehr Zeit und Sorgfalt verwandte, wie auf Unterredungen mit ganzen Gruppen und auch auf das, was wir unter religiösen Ansprachen und Predigten verstehen. Dem gegenüber steht die moderne Tendenz, nicht nur innerhalb der Gemeinde möglichst alle Glieder in besondre Vereine zu gruppieren, sondern gar eine **Sozialisierung ganzer Volks- und Völkergruppen,** ja der ganzen Menschheit zu erzielen, so sehr im Vordergrund kirchlichen Interesses, daß die private Seelsorge vielfach darunter leiden mag. Persönlicher Umschau und Nachfrage gemäß, möchte es Schreiber dieser Zeilen fast scheinen, als schwinde im Zeitalter kirchlicher „Drives" das Interesse für die geistige und geistliche Seite des Amtes; etwa im gleichen Verhältnis zu den sich häufenden materiellen Ansprüchen und Anforderungen, die unter Verwendung immer exakterer Geschäftsmethoden zu erledigen sind. Selbst bezüglich der Vorträge in engeren Pastorenkreisen wird **der Wunsch nach „etwas Praktischem"** so vorwiegend, gestattet der „stete Weiterfluß des reichhaltigen Lebens" so selten ein beschauliches, neu belebendes Weilen nahe den ewigen Quellen, daß gerade eine verstärkte Bevorzugung der „materia privatissima supranaturalisque" dringend anzubahnen ist.

2. Obigen Ausführungen gemäß ist nun auch der im Folgenden näher beschriebene Vorschlag zur Anbahnung und **Verwendung eines besondern Hilfsmittels** im Dienst der Seelsorge zu verstehen. Professor D. W. Gruehn bietet nämlich in seiner Abhand-

lung „Seelsorgerliche Analysen,“ [2] nach Darlegung ernstlich erwogener Gesichtspunkte, einen so beachtenswerten Vorschlag, unser Problem betreffend, daß seine Studie unsern weiteren Ausführungen zumeist zur Grundlage dienen soll.[3]

Als wissenschaftliches Hilfsmittel hat nämlich ein Verfahren nach psychologischen Gesichtspunkten auf mehreren Gebieten schon länger her eine weitere Verbreitung gefunden. In Europa wird die psychologisch pädagogische Beobachtungsmethode bevorzugt, die dem individuellen Charakter der Schüler und Zöglinge Rechnung trägt und die seiner Zeit auch in unsern Kreisen (im früheren pädagogischen Beiblatt) betont wurde. Hierzulande wieder hat sich jüngst unter dem schönen Namen Behaviorismus eine generalisierende Erziehungsmethode nach psychologischen Grundsätzen in weiterem Umfang eingebürgert, die kürzlich vom bereits erwähnten Graf Keyserling einer besonders scharfen Kritik unterworfen wurde. Nachdem nun ferner auch von den fortschrittlichen und verläßlicheren Exponenten der Heilkunde der hohe Wert der psychologischen Hilfsmethode anerkannt wurde, dürfen wir billig erwarten, daß kein Leser des „Magazins“ Ansichten und Vorschlägen vonseiten psychologisch orientierter Forscher oder von Religionspsychologen kommend ohne weiteres absprechend gegenüber stehen wird. Psychologisch will doch besagen, **„den Gesetzen der Seelenkunde gemäß“** und bei Förderung der allen Seelenhirten wichtigen Aufgabe könnte man gewiß auf manche andre Art eher fehlgehen, als indem man besagten Vorschlägen ein offen Ohr und nachprüfenden Sinn leiht. Oder heißt es nicht: Prüfet alles, um das Gute zu behalten?

An bereits angegebenem Ort, Seite 306, erhebt der Verfasser die Frage: Was geschieht heute in den Kirchen zur Pflege der Seelsorge? In Beantwortung derselben hebt er hervor, daß alle Kirchen ihre zukünftigen Seelsorger theoretisch vorbilden; woran sich noch Kurse für bereits im Amt stehende anschließen. (Man vergleiche dazu unsre Post-Graduate Kurse.) Auch sei ein reicher Schatz praktischer Erfahrung, im Lauf der Jahrhunderte gesammelt, schriftlich fixiert vorhanden, welche „Vorbilder der Seelsorge“ eine vertiefende Ergänzung zur wissenschaftlichen Ausbildung bieten. Dazu tritt dann die persönliche Erfahrung in seelsorgerlicher Praxis, die dort besonders wertvoll ist, wo der Pastor noch unbedingtes Vertrauen genießt, so daß man ihm auch einen tieferen Einblick ins Seelenleben gewährt.

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[2]) Vgl. Archiv für Religionspsychologie und Seelenführung, Bd. 4, Verl. Ed. Pfeiffer, Leipzig.

[3]) Die im Folgenden nur unter a. a. O., nebst Seitenzahl sich findenden Angaben beziehen sich auf D. Gruehns Abhandlung in gen. Archiv.

Aber selbst wo all diese Momente gewissenhafte Verwertung finden, bleiben sie eben doch immer noch individuell begrenzte Hilfsmittel, die teilweise stark überschätzt werden. Denn, trotz Vorbildung und Amtserfahrung hat die **kirchliche Seelsorge tatsächlich vielfach versagt.** Warum? — Die für den Unterricht verwandten Gebiete oder Fächer sind doch sicherlich zweckentsprechend. Es wird da die Geschichte der Seelsorge dargestellt und auch die Ziele derselben erörtert. Dazu werden ergänzend auch pädagogische und sonstige praktische Ratschläge erteilt, die sich auf bewährte theoretische und praktische Erfahrungen gründen. So trefflich und unerläßlich aber solcher Unterricht ist, klafft doch in demselben **eine verhängnisvolle Lücke:** „Diese Lücke ist das Studium des Menschen von heute, wie er wirklich ist, nicht wie er gedacht wird; und das Studium der verschiedenen Wege einer seelischen Beeinflußung. Vgl. a. a. O., S. 308.

Dem in genannter Abhandlung bisher Gesagten dürften wir nun besonders auch darum beipflichten, als uns bewußt ist, daß alles, was in dieser Beziehung Personen früherer Generationen gegenüber angepaßt war, heute nicht mehr voll und ganz zutreffen mag, wir aber **unser Amt an Menschen von heute** auszurichten haben. Darum sollte eine Art seelsorgerliches Lehrbuch „vom Umgang mit Menschen," behandelnd „die Lehre vom Menschen und der Menschenbehandlung" in den Unterrichtsplan eingereiht werden. Darin sollten nicht nur die Höhen- und Tiefpunkte des menschlichen Empfindens, sondern auch die feineren Regungen oder Schattierungen des Seelenlebens ihren rechten Ausdruck finden. Denn, wie Gruehn mit Recht sagt: „Wer wollte menschliches Seelenleben zu leiten unternehmen, der nichts von den grundlegenden Gesetzen weiß, denen alles Seelische folgt . . . Weil die Psychologie es ist, welche sich müht, die Eigenart seelischen Lebens bis in ihre letzten Tiefen zu studieren, . . . ist sie an erster Stelle hier zu Rat zu ziehen."

Freilich mag bei rein oberflächlicher psychologischer Einstellung eher Verwirrung wie Heilsames erzielt werden. Wenn aber auch nur als Hilfsdisziplin neben Pädagogik und etwa zugänglichen wertvollen Resultaten medizinischer Heilmethoden verwandt, ist eben doch eine **gründlichere Kenntnis der Psychologie** das einzige mehr ausreichende Mittel, jene tatsächlich vorhandene Lücke zu füllen. Daß auch heute noch manche Geistliche der „Seelenkunde" so kalt, fremd oder abstoßend gegenüber stehen, beweißt, daß ihnen der Maßstab fehlt, die **Mängel ihrer wirklichen Menschenkenntnis** zu beurteilen; aber auch der gute Wille, in der heutigen Einstellung der religiösen Psychologie einen notwendigen Bundesgenossen kennen und verwerten zu lernen. Wo es nämlich gilt, die hohen

Ziele des Hirtenamtes in „lebenswahren Situationen" verwirklicht zu sehen, versagt meist geistlicher Zuspruch allein, „die letzten und tiefsten Probleme der Menschenseele" benötigen psychologisch orientierter Behandlung.

Bereits ist schon der kirchlichen Seelsorge eine vielhundertjährige Führung durch ganz andersartige Bestrebungen und verwirrende Strömungen aus der Hand genommen; nicht nur durch Richtungen, die sich bloß unter christlichem Gewand verbreiten wollen, sondern auch durch jene bereits erwähnte zielstrebige Propaganda von ausgesprochen antichristlicher Tendenz. Ob nicht auch die **Art der durchschnittlich geübten Seelsorge** diese Situation mit verschuldet hat? D. Gruehn sagt, aufgrund von ihm angestellter Beobachtungen und nachprüfender Gespräche: „Es wachsen Seelsorger heran, die nichts von der Seele verstehen. Es fehlt heute noch völlig an Seelsorgern, die die gesicherten Ergebnisse der modernen Psychologie beherrschen und anzuwenden vermögen." H. Rendtorff[4] redet gar von einem „homo homileticus"; einem Menschen, der nur in der Phantasie des Homileten existiert, weshalb des letzteren Predigt den Menschen selber im Hörer garnicht trifft.

Den Menschen so zu sehen, wie er wirklich ist, bedeutet eine viel schwerere Aufgabe, als die meisten wähnen. Daran hindert noch vielfach jene naive Einbildung so mancher, eine besonders zutreffende Menschenkenntnis zu besitzen; die sich aber leider meist „im Kreise etlicher weltfremder Ideen" bewegt, oder gar nur in einem einmal vorgefaßten Werturteil über die einzelnen Beichtkinder besteht. Dagegen sollte ein Seelsorger auch derselben Person gegenüber stets von Fall zu Fall gleichsam sein Urteil neu bilden; so aber daß er dem Betreffenden zunächst in Vertrauen entgegenkommt und auf sein Anliegen oder Wünsche teilnehmend und verständnisvoll eingeht. Wir können Seelen nicht leiten oder beeinflussen, wenn es uns nicht gelingt, ein **inneres Band zwischen ihnen und uns** herzustellen, ein Band, das vor allem aus gegenseitigem Vertrauen besteht. Ohne diese Voraussetzung wird uns ja freilich auch schwerlich Jemand einen tieferen Einblick in sein wirkliches Seelenleben gewähren.

Um **wirklich religiös beeinflussen** zu können, wird ein Seelsorger zuvor in jedem Fall sich sein besonders Urteil zu bilden haben; etwa nach den Richtlinien der allgemeinen und der speziellen Eigenart des betreffenden Menschen. Erst daraufhin vermag er dessen Bewertung und demgemäße Beeinflussung in religiöser und sittlicher Hinsicht einigermaßen sachgemäß vorzunehmen. **Ein**

[4]) Pastoralblätter 1928, 5. Heft. Vgl. auch J. Schulte, Pastorales und Aszetisches, S. 104 ff.

derartiger Einzelfall dürfte etwa derart verlaufen, daß der Seelsorger durch gütiges Entgegenkommen und taktvolles Fragen ein möglichst zutreffendes Bild des betreffenden Beichtkindes oder „geistlichen Patienten" zu gewinnen sucht; namentlich auch über seine Lebensgeschichte, Umgebung, persönliche Eigenart und religiöse Stellung. Diesem Menschen in seiner besondern Lage steht nun ein Seelsorger gegenüber, der ein hohes Ziel im Auge hat. Ihm ist auch nicht nur die Geschichte der Seelsorge mit ihren reichen Ergebnissen bekannt, er kennt auch die pädagogischen und psychologischen Methoden der Menschenbehandlung. Doch auch der Grenzen seines eigenen Kennens sich bewußt, schöpft er darum im Gebet aus der ewigen Licht- und Kraftquelle, durchdrungen von der Bedeutung seiner Aufgabe und dem ehrlichen Willen, dem Nächsten zu helfen. Nach „lebndiger Einfühlung" in das besondre „Wesen des letzteren, wählt er nach ernstlicher Ueberlegung der verschiedenen gangbaren Wege den anscheinend passendsten. In zielbewußter Weise wendet er zunächst jenes Mittel an, das dem Betreffenden gegenüber am geeignetsten erscheint; doch vertauscht er dasselbe freilich, angezeigten Falls, auch gegen ein andres. Ist nun beim betreffenden Pflegling eine längere geistliche Behandlung erforderlich, so mag der Seelenhirte in manchen Fällen entweder der Beihilfe aus der Umgebung jenes sich bedienen müssen, oder auch durch geeignete Lektüre den heilsamen Einfluß verstärken. In manchen Fällen allerdings, wo solches geboten erscheint, wird er auch zur Besserung oder Umgestaltung der äußeren Verhältnisse seines Pfleglings nach Kräften beitragen. So führt er denselben allmählich dem hohen Ziel näher, macht ihm die göttliche Kraftquelle in Christo immer vertrauter, bis jener eigene Schritte zu ihr tut. Doch, wie erwähnt, erfordert jeder Einzelfall seine besondre Behandlung. Vgl. a. a. O., S. 315.

Eine **wissenschaftlich umfassende Darstellung der Seelsorge,** nach der die Praxis schon längst verlangt, ist in absehbarer Zeit schwerlich zu erwarten. Doch vermag bereits die heutige Praxis der Seelsorge auch hierfür recht **wertvolle Vorarbeit** zu leisten. Es können Pastoren an der Hand obigen beispielsweisen Einzelfalles Notizen über von ihnen in der Praxis eingeschlagene Wege und Beobachtungen, die sie dabei gemacht, recht bald danach und möglichst genau niederschreiben. Darin wären vor allem eine nähere Beschreibung der Umstände des betreffenden Pfleglings, die an ihn gerichteten speziellen Fragen, nebst seinen Antworten, sowie die etwa ersichtlichen Resultate solcher Behandlung wiederzugeben. Nicht nur würde dadurch manch allgemein wertvolles Material gewonnen, sondern auf diese Weise auch der Blick des einzelnen Seelsorgers für die Wirklichkeit um ihn her geschärft. Auch würde durch

derart gewissenhaft fortgesetzte Arbeit für ihn eine **Brücke zu fremdem Seelenleben** gebaut. Vgl. a. a. O., S. 319.

Es ist selbstverständlich, daß bei solchem Verfahren, auch bei der Niederschrift, mit Takt und Vorsicht vorzugehen ist und nie die wirklichen Namen der Betreffenden zu veröffentlichen sind. Daß auch die kirchliche Praxis Europas sich bereits dieser Methode bedient, beweisen zum Beispiel schon die lebenswahren Darstellungen in „Christliche Volkswacht," 1929, Heft 1. Daß derartige seelsorgerliche Analysen sich auch im Dienst des Konfirmandenunterrichts durchführen lassen, hat O. Lorenz[5] bereits nachgewiesen.

Abschließend dürfen wir wohl sagen, daß das im Vorstehenden empfohlene Vorgehen nur mehr in seinem methodischen Verfahren und schriftlichen Fixieren von der Arbeitsweise jener Seelsorger abweicht, die eben durch möglichst **entschiedene Durchführung jedes einzelnen Falles** ihrer Praxis nicht nur den Ruf besonderer Menschenkenntnis, sondern auch **wirkliche Resultate** ihrer Arbeit erzielten. Es soll auch nicht unerwähnt bleiben, daß ein Seelsorger sich mitunter auch solchen Pfleglingen gegenüber sehen mag, deren Behandlung durch einen Nervenarzt dringend angezeigt ist.[7] Ohne vorausgehende, eventuell gleichzeitige ärztliche Behandlung wird die Einwirkung auf das Seelenleben derartiger Patienten wohl nur ausnahmsweise Erfolg aufweisen.

Wie viel Pastoren den oben vorgeschlagenen Weg nun auch wirklich erproben werden? Bis in unsre Tage hinein hat sich ja leider der Irrtum fortgeerbt, als schlösse das bekannte „cor facit theologum" ein ergänzendes „mens studiosaque" nicht ein, sondern aus. Schlimmer noch steht es freilich da, wo ein „Seelenhirt" jeder privaten, persönlichen Auseinandersetzung über das Eine, was not ist, möglichst aus dem Weg geht. Der **Wert der einzelnen Seele**, um die der unvergleichliche Meister mit heiligem Eifer warb, ist ja heute vielfach im Preise gefallen; und zwar nicht nur da, wo man eifrig beflissen ist, große ökonomische Pläne mit dem Streben nach dem höchsten Gut zu vereinigen. Solche Seelsorger jedoch, die nicht nach immer moderneren mechanischen Betriebsmitteln, sondern nach gangbaren Wegen Ausschau halten, um den eingerissenen Seelenschaden zu heilen, werden gewiß auch

[5]) Der Konfirmandenunterricht, Tübingen, 1919.

An unsern amerikanischen Behaviorismus aber mögen uns jene Ausführungen gemahnen, welche W. Sterns[6] zur rechten Beob-

[6]) Psychologie der frühen Kindheit, Leipzig, 1914.

achtung kindlichen Seelenlebens bietet.

[7]) A. a. O. S. 327.

ungewohnte Hilfsmittel gern erproben, wenn es die Lösung des heute besonders erschwerten Problems der Seelenleitung gilt.

Ist jede Seele von unendlichem Wert, so hat auch jedes Menschenleben sein besonders Interesse, als ein seinem Schöpfer unterstehendes, unwiederholbares Ereignis, zu dessen Verständnis und rechter Leitung, Leben und Wissenschaft sich die Hand reichen sollen. Drängt Christi Liebe uns dazu, so ist es uns möglich, durch Nachforschen und angemessene Anweisung zur Lösung der Fragen eines Menschenschicksals in christlichem Sinn beizutragen. Auf solchem Weg bildet sich dann das erstrebenswerteste Wissen, Seelenkenntnis, und nur wenige Schritte trennen oft Wissenschaft und Leben von einander. A. a. O., S. 340. Wer jene auf geordnetem Weg geht, vermag am ehesten den Inhalt menschlichen Lebens recht zu bereichern; wenn er nämlich damit bewußt nach dem Prinzip handelt: Liebe deinen Nächsten als dich selbst.

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EDITORIALS

NOT BY MIGHT OR POWER

Some time ago we had an Institute here on the activities of the church, and one of the outside speakers was Dr. Clayton Morrison, the editor of "the Christian Century." We have frequent occasion to mention this eminent gentleman, but we believe our readers won't object if we tell them again what he said this time and why we could not wholly agree with him. According to the program he was to speak on "recent trends in religious thought." He changed that, however, and substituted for it "recent trends in the life of the church." We wondered why he made the change. It could hardly be because he did not feel able to speak on the former subject. Dr. Morrison writes and speaks on nearly every subject imaginable; so "recent trends in religious thoughts" would in themselves hardly have caused him to hesitate. Perhaps he thought that the intention was to get him to enlarge on the conflict between Fundamentalists and Modernists, and that if he did his advocacy of Modernism would not be very pleasing to his audience. The people of the "Baptist Temple," where the Institute was held, especially are of a conservative type.

At any rate Morrison took the other, more practical and less delicate, subject. He took us back to the war and its effect on the life of the church. The war had unified the country, sectionalism and racial diversities were forgotten and we were all Americans (He didn't refer to the feelings of those descended from the Central Powers). Our only objective was the winning of the war, which we thought was tantamount to the saving of civilization and victory of righteousness. Even our denominational preferences were in the melting pot: Protestant ministers would hold up the crucifix before the eyes of Catholic soldiers dying on the field of battle. This exalted attitude we kept for a while after the war. We talked and planned about Organic Union of all Protestantism; we started a World Forward Movement: millions were to be gathered by a non-sectarian committee for purposes that were to benefit all.

But pretty soon the emotional uplift calmed down; the enthusiasm lost its momentum. The Methodists fell away first, others followed. The Boards of the churches asserted their needs and appealed to the old loyalties again. That was to be expected, said the speaker, traditions that it took centuries to develop won't

die overnight. Organizations on which the work of the church depends must live even while the world is getting ready for momentous changes.

That, nevertheless, the movement for church union is not dead must be obvious to everybody. The pace may have slackened; the realities of life have to be faced. But the union of Protestantism is sure to come. Merger movements are arising, developing, taking shape everywhere.

Besides, Dr. Morrison continued, it is impossible to go on as before in the old spirit of sectarianism. Why is it impossible? Because the laymen of the church won't stand for it. They have not the old loyalty to their particular denomination. People may call themselves Methodist or Baptist, but that is only for convenience sake. In their heart of hearts they don't care one bit for their respective shibboleths. They are Christians first of all and if it was left to them the union would rather come today than tomorrow. They can't see why when we all claim allegiance to the same Lord we must erect so many barriers; why there must be so much waste, unnecessary competition, overlapping of work in the same community, etc.

The problems of confronting the church are too great and difficult to be solved by a church divided into scores of denominations. Think of the worldwide task of the church in foreign missions; of the Christianizing of modern industry at home; of the abolition of war. Only a united church can hope to make a real contribution to these great causes.

Finally, so concluded the speaker, the world today pays less and less attention to things done on a small scale. Business is getting bigger and bigger. Banks consolidate; buildings rise to 50 and 60 stories; theatres are housed in more palatial and better equipped buildings day after day. How can the churches get the ear and eye of the public if they continue as small and inadequately equipped as in the past? Churches must unite, build larger structures, more beautiful, more imposing, by their very size and beauty must they seek to appeal to the modern man. Every day of the week he is under the influence of such factors, can we expect his mind to work differently when on Sundays he goes to church?

It was here that we had to register our disagreement with the speaker. He reminded us strongly of a speech made here by Mr. R. Babson, the statistician, two years ago. His title was "Industrialized Religion or the Religion of Tomorrow" (see "May", 1927, July number, p. 293 ff.). He claimed that the church must adopt the methods of industry to keep its hold on the modern man. The church must learn to advertise, to consolidate, to be efficient, to

impress by the very bigness of its plans and its "plants." Creeds are only a liability ("50% don't believe in the Apostle's Creed"); denominational seminaries and papers are a veritable curse. Mr. Morrison did not use such harsh terms, but he seems to have the same faith in the methods of industry as applied to the church.

It's the irony of church history, however, that the church was strongest when it was weakest in organization, outward efficiency, adequate buildings and artistic attractions. The Spirit of the Lord was not hindered by the absence of all these things. Now it would be foolish to deny a certain element of truth in Morrison's and Babson's ideas. Still if in 1930, the 1900th anniversary of the founding of the church, we need one thing more than another, it is a new baptism of the Spirit, for after all, power is more essential than methods.

MISSOURI'S PROTEST AGAINST MODERNISM

On October 27th the 30 Missouri Lutheran churches of this city observed Reformation Day at the great Public Auditorium. Six to seven thousand people were present and a choir of one thousand children from the parochial schools sang the old inspiring songs. No other Protestant church could stage such a performance so successfully and it is no wonder that the Lutherans took pride in it and derived inspiration from it. Since this is the 400th anniversary of the Protest of the Protestant estates, assembled at Speyer, against imperial threats of suppression, the meeting was conceived as a public Protest against the forces that threaten the life and welfare of Protestantism today. These destructive tendencies are to the Lutheran to be found in Modernism. So the speaker of the evening, Professor W. A. Mayer, of Concordia Seminary, fired a terrific broadside against this subtle, pervasive and powerful foe. Professor Mayer, after graduating from his Synod's schools, had gone to Harvard to study the Semitic languages. He had written a learned treatise there and received his Ph.D., the infallible guarantee of true scholarship. But, nevertheless, his address showed that if he had gone through the hot furnace of modern science, his faith had not even been singed.

The Protestantism of today, the speaker said, is only a haggard spectre of the Protestantism of 1529, and its high and holy ideals of religious truth have been sacrificed on the altars of modernism. The Protestants of 1529 believed in the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures. Hundreds of ministers of American churches, of different kinds of creed, reject it openly (cp. "What 700 Protestant ministers believe"). Science is the savior of today. Genesis

is disregarded in its story of the creation as in that of the fall of man. Science claims to know how the world was made, how old it is and how old man. People believe science although the mistakes and misrepresentation of science are as numerous as they are ludicrous. Far be it from the speaker to throw aspersions on the true achievements of science. But when it comes to the soul's salvation we must lean on something higher than the theories of science.

If we despise the grace and truth of God, the consuming fire of his wrath will come down on us. The evil results of the modern spirit are already upon us: divorce, birth control, companionate marriage, crime, suicide. All this follows in the wake of Modernism. The rejection of the Bible is one of the chief contributary causes to the present crime wave.

What is to help us out of this slough of despond? It is not true that "intelligence is the only cure in all the world for crime." What is needed is a new statement of real Protestant principles. Here the speaker led up to a glorification of Luther's Catechism (now also 400 years old), the world's "greatest little book." If we learn again to fear and love God and obey his commandments, a better and happier day would soon come, for individual, home, business life. If we believe in the 3 articles of the faith, salvation will envelop us in its folds. Here is the power of the church for the present and the hope for the future.

The speaker concluded by asking the audience: Are you ready to find in the Catechism a symbol and pledge and an assurance of a more dynamic Lutheran church, and are you ready to do your share in establishing this new and courageous Lutheranism? (When we heard this we were not quite sure whether the professor was not a little guilty of Melanchthonian synergism). The Lutherans were ready and after joining in Luther's mighty hymn, went home with joy in their hearts.

Now we were a little jealous when we saw this great host of Lutheran people and compared with it the few hundreds that we could muster on an occasion like this, in the same city, with half the number of churches. We also were convinced that Luther has summed up in his Catechism the chief truths of the gospel in masterly fashion and strikingly popular speech. We, of course, do not consider the Bible a textbook on science and leave science entirely unhampered in its study of the origin and age of the world and man. We do not swallow every new theory or discovery of science whole. We discover in the Bible a human element and are not forced, therefore, to accept every statement in it as a revela-

tion from the divine spirit. But we stand fast by, and on, the old teachings of Christ and his redemption.

Still the professor did seem to us to simplify the task resting on the churches too much. Things won't simply get better if we keep on teaching and inculcating the Lutheran catechism. The Lutheran catechism teaches the law and the gospel as the salvation for individual, family, and in a general way, of the relation between masters and servants. The "social" gospel in the modern sense is not in it. At any rate, the problems of modern industry did not come within its scope. And from the maladjustments of the industrial system of our day originate many, if not most, of our evils. It is true if a man begins to lead a more consecrated Christian life, things become better for him and his, but he can't change the circumstances that work hardships on others. He may be a kindhearted employer but he, as a member of a "soulless" corporation, cannot change the remorseless working of the profit system. Nor would we have come as far in the fight against war, the greatest collective sin of the age, as we have, if we had only taught the laws and beliefs of the catechism.

The professor went too far in his criticism of Modernism. Modernism is not to blame for all the troubles of our age. And he expects too much of the catechism, or of the preaching of the "simple" gospel. The problem before us is not simple at all, it is complicated and difficult. Luther and the other Reformers wrestled valiantly with the evils of their time; but in fighting those of our age the Church needs to gather new experience, so that adding to the faith of the fathers she may receive new light and leading for gigantic evils and herculean tasks.

Die Generalkonferenz zu Rochester

Es ist ein Vorrecht, einer Generalkonferenz beizuwohnen. Nicht ohne Grund setzen unsre Synodalen eine Ehre darein, als Delegaten erwählt zu werden. Bei weitem nicht alle Pastoren nehmen an der Diskussion teil, aber sie sind doch dabei, während gewissermaßen synodale Geschichte gemacht wird. Im Unterschied von einigen andern religiösen Körperschaften spielen theologische Fragen bei uns eine verhältnismäßig geringe Rolle. In Rochester wurden Modernismus und Fundamentalismus kaum erwähnt. Bei einer einzigen Gelegenheit lag diese Streitfrage sozusagen im Hintergrund des Bewußtseins, aber sie wurde nicht aktuell, nicht brennend, weil die Synodalen zu der Fakultät und der Seminarbehörde das Vertrauen hatten, daß der alte Glaube treu bewahrt werde, wenn auch die Wissenschaft und die Erfordernisse der Zeit gebührende Berücksichtigung fänden.

Die aufregendste Episode der Konferenz war die Wahl des Synodalpräses. Zu einem solchen Amt erkoren zu werden ist naturgemäß eine hohe Ehre. Nichtsdestoweniger ereignete es sich, daß drei Synodalen nacheinander die ihnen angebotene Wahl ausschlugen. Am meisten Aufsehen erregte der Fall des erst Erwählten. Mit seltener Einstimmigkeit und fast elementarer Wucht fiel die Wahl auf die Person des Mannes, in dessen Kirche die Konferenz abgehalten wurde. Es erschien den meisten, als wenn der also Erkorene die Wahl annehmen müsse. Er lehnte aber nicht nur ab, sondern sagte auch der Konferenz solche Wahrheiten mit solcher Schärfe, daß sie wohl von keinem andern es hingenommen hätte. Und statt entrüstet zu werden, wurden seine Aeußerungen mit Beifall begrüßt. In der Geschichte unsrer Kirche wohl eine beispiellose Tatsache!

Die dominierende Persönlichkeit des Betreffenden, seine hohen Gaben, sein imponierender Erfolg in der Entwicklung der Salems-Gemeinde, seine faszinierende Weise der Rede und seine großen Verdienste im Interesse der Synode mögen die Vorgänge an jenem Freitag Morgen in etwa erklären, aber nachmachen kann es ihm keiner. Wir kennen einige wenige, die so im Notfall ihrer Gemeinde gegenüber auftreten könnten, aber vor der höchsten gesetzgebenden Körperschaft ihrer Kirche würden sie doch andre Saiten aufziehen.

Selbstverständlich fehlte es nicht an Kritik, an offen ausgesprochener Kritik. Jedoch der Mann, der als die Aufregung sich in etwa gelegt, zum Synodalpräses erwählt wurde, Pastor Locher, sagte in seiner Annahmerede, Dr. Jr. sei der Synode zum Johannes dem Täufer gegeben worden, um sie zur Einkehr zu rufen. Daher solle man seine harten Worte sich zum Besten dienen lassen, zugleich aber zuversichtlich gewiß sein, daß der Herr auch in Zukunft seinen Geist nicht von uns nehmen werde.

In einem höchst interessanten Bericht über die Konferenz, den ein Laie (Herr Grall von Lorain, Ohio) auf der Clevelander Kreiskonferenz gab, wird als der Höhepunkt (der Gefühlshöhepunkt) der Konferenz der Gottesdienst am Sonntagnachmittag bezeichnet, wo die Chöre der evangelischen Gemeinden von Rochester sangen und Pastor Bruening seinen meisterhaften Vortrag über die Stellung der Musik in der Kirche gab. Es tut uns leid, die beredten und begeisterten Worte nicht wiedergeben zu können, in denen dieser intelligente Laie seinen Gefühlen über diesen herrlichen Gesangsgottesdienst freien Lauf läßt.

Wir können auch nicht die Absicht haben, die Konferenz, die eine volle Woche dauerte, auch nur annähernd vollständig zu beschreiben. Eins nur wollen wir noch hervorheben. Unser junger

Mitsynodale, R. Niebuhr, hat vor einem Jahr ein Buch geschrieben, das seinen Ruf und Ruhm gewaltig gemehrt hat, und diesem ersten kürzlich ein zweites folgen lassen. Jetzt wird sein Name mit Fosdick und Bischof McConnell oft in einem Atem genannt! Nicht als wenn er mit Fosdick an einem Strang zöge. Fosdick hat wesentlich eine intellektuelle Aufgabe, nämlich Glaube und Wissen in Einklang zu bringen und bei dieser Arbeit opfert er unsers Erachtens wesentliche Elemente des christlichen Glaubens. Niebuhrs Arbeit ist eine soziale. Er will unser wirtschaftliches Leben — wenn möglich — mit dem Geist Christi durchsäuert sehen. Er ist auf der Generalkonferenz stark hervorgetreten. Er redet immer über soziale Fragen, mit größter Sachkenntnis, mit leichter Beherrschung der Form. Er redet zuweilen leidenschaftlich, zu leidenschaftlich für seine Nerven. Er sollte mit größerer Ruhe sprechen, sonst wird er seine Kraft vorzeitig verzehren. Die Synode ist stolz auf ihn. Natürlich genug, denn bisher hat sie nie einen gehabt, der so hoch gestiegen wäre, in solch erstaunlich kurzer Zeit, der wie Bischof McConnell sagte, nicht nur uns gehört, sondern der ganzen Kirche. Und er ist seiner Kirche treu geblieben, trotz seiner Versetzung nach dem Union Seminary. Der Herr erhalte ihn fein demütig!

Es scheint, andre folgen ihm, aber müssen sie denn alle aus *einem* Feld erwachsen?!

The Christian World

The Unitarians

MORTIMER SMITH

The Untarians, theologically, are the most liberal religious sect in the United States—and also the most insignificant numerically. The movement came into existence in this country more than a hundred years ago, but since that time it has succeeded in gaining but 60,000 adherents. Other sects with far shorter histories and far less reasonable theologies have done much better—Christian Science, for instance. The divine inspiration descended upon Mrs. Eddy in 1866, only sixty-three years ago, but today some of the more optimistic Christian Scientists estimate that no less than 10,000,000 disciples believe in the miraculous power of her gospel.

Perhaps Unitarianism would have become more widespread were it not for the fact that Untarians seem to have no proselyting zeal whatsoever. Apart from the publishing of pamphlets describing their history and beliefs, which are distributed gratis to those who ask for them, they make no effort to spread their gospel and win converts. One of the favorite taunts of the Orthodox is that they have never sent a single missionary to foreign lands to save the poor heathen. The fact that the movement had its origin in New England and has been, until recent years, almost exclusively a phenomenon of the state of Massachusetts, has no doubt had some bearing on the fact that its adherents lack the ardor that the Evangelical Churches have always displayed. A certain sense of intellectual superiority has been characteristic of Unitarians from the beginning, and it has caused them to hold aloof from the coarse methods employed by other sects to swell their ranks. They have always been very exclusive, as befits Boston Brahmins. For if the masses have not embraced the faith, then every president of Harvard University has, from 1810 down to the present day. So have all the literary lions of the North—Emerson, Thoreau, Whittier, Lowell and Holmes—and many American statesmen, North and South—Webster, Sumner, Edward Everett, Calhound, Hannibal Hamlin, John Marshall and Joseph Story. A host of other famous Americans have also been Unitarians—among them Margaret Fuller, Agassiz, Julia Ward Howe, Susan B. Anthony, John Fiske, Francis Parkman, Horace Mann and Lucretia Mott. The church proudly claims the late Steinmetz and the late Luther Burbank, but there is some doubt if either of them, strictly speaking, could have been called a Unitarian, though the electrical wizard was a friend of the Rev. Ernst Caldecott, of the Unitarian church in Schenectady, and on occasion attended that church, and Burbank seems to have been at least spiritually if not officially a Unitarian. The late Senator Robert M. LaFollette was a Unitarian and so

is Senator Duncan I. Fletcher of Florida. So is Mr. Hoover's new superintendent of Federal prisons, Sanford Bates. So are David Starr Jordan, Chief Justice Taft, Robert Millikan, Alice Foote MacDougall (the coffee queen) and A. Lawrence Lowell.

Thus the worldly *elite* if not the heavenly elect go to make up this little sect. If the fellowship is comprised of such as these, why bother about the rabble? This has always been the attitude of the Boston Unitarian. But now that centers of the Unitarianism are growing up in other cities and men of a less strictly academic type than the preachers of yesterday are entering the ministry, the church is losing some of its superior aloofness. It is, indeed, even venturing to conduct missions, not dissimilar to the Catholic mission for non-Catholics, in parts of the country that are strongholds of fundamentalism. These missions are preaching services at which the uninitiate may hear the gospel of liberal Christianity expounded by the most adroit and attractive personalities of the denomination.

Unitarianism has proceeded on its way throughout the years so unpretentiously that many otherwise enlistened persons have but a vague idea of what it's all about. The general impression is that it is sort of second cousin to Episcopalianism, with the same rather elastic moral code for its constituents but without the ritualistic frumpery of that church. The rigidly orthodox Protestant, although frequently frowning on what he considers the laxity of the Episcopalians in dealing with sin and the Devil, yet accepts their theology. But he anathematizes the Unitarians forever because Untarian theology definitely rejects all the doctrines of revealed Christianity. This rejection is only implied; the Unitarians have no set creed of denial, as the Episcopalians and Presbyterians and Methodists have creeds of affirmation. They have, indeed, no creed at all; the nearest approach to one is a statement accredited to James Freeman Clarke (it is still to be found in the Sunday school rooms of some of the more old-fashioned churches, framed and hung upon the wall) which declares: "We believe in the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man, the Leadership of Jesus and the progress of mankind onward and upward forever." The General Conference of Unitarian and other Christian Churches meeting in 1894 also declared: "These churches accept the religion of Jesus, holding, in accordance with his teaching, that practical religion is summed up in love to God, and love to men."

Unitarianism as a type of religious thought is thus as old as Jewish monotheism, and as an organized religion can be traced back to the sixteenth century. In the early Christian Church the prevailing thought was monotheistic, and in so far as they were true sons of Israel even Jesus and Paul can be said to have been Unitarians. The view of God as a unity which was the position of Arius seems to have prevailed throughout Christendom until the Council of Nicea in 235, where it was supplanted by the Trinitarianism of Athanasius, which placed Jesus and the Holy Ghost as co-equal Persons with the Father in the Godhead. After this Council Arianism was smothered, as was all free

thinking in science and philosophy, and not until the Renaissance did Unitarianism again become an influence. As an organization it first appeared in Transylvania with the conversion of the church at Kolozsvar in 1568, under the leadership of Francis David. Churches also flourished in Poland during this century, but were finally suppressed. In England the first Unitarian church was organized in London in 1774. In America, King's Chapel, Boston, became Unitarian in 1787. Thus Unitarianism has a background extending much farther into the past than those of most other Protestant sects. Whatever other indictment may be brought against it, it can not be said to lack the dignity of age.

The historical reason for the founding of Unitarianism in America was the inability of certain New England Congregationalists to accept the doctrine of the Trinity. As a logical outcome of this doubt they denied also the deity of Jesus and the historic doctrines of the church regarding his person, but they nevertheless accepted his teachings and called themselves Christians, to the scandal of the Orthodox. The patron saint of the movement was William Ellery Channing, who in 1819 delivered his famous Baltimore sermon at the installation of the Rev. Jared Sparks, wherein he defined the chief points of Unitarian Christianity. This sermon was the direct cause of a split between the Trinitarians and the Unitarians within the Congregational Church, and led to the founding in 1825 of the American Unitarian Association, which has functioned ever since.

It conducts all the denominational business, such as building new churches, aiding weak ones, distributing literature, arranging pensions, etc., and is comprised of a president and a corps of officers representing districts all over the United States. The president of the association from 1900 to 1927 was Dr. Samuel A. Eliot, whose father, the late Charles W. Eliot, president of Harvard, was looked upon as the lay pope of the movement. Urbane and imperturbable, the younger Eliot ruled the denomination with a strong hand during his term of office, serving as a foil to those radicals who would commit it to acts not in keeping with the Bostonian tradition. Upon the death of Dr. Paul Revere Frothingham, minister of the Arlington Street Church in Boston, Dr. Eliot relinquished the presidency to become his successor in what is generally considered to be the wealthiest and most distinguished Unitarian parish in America. His influence, however, is still a potent factor in the denomination, and his successor, Dr. Louis C. Cornish, carries on its affairs with admirable fidelity to the Eliot policies.

Being a small sect, the Unitarians have but one denominational journal, the *Christian Register*, but this is one of the best edited and most interesting religious magazines in the country. Its editor is Dr. Albert C. Dieffenbach, who assumed control in 1918 and since then has adroitly changed it from a typical church paper, with the traditional pastoral notes, Sunday school stories, etc., into a journal of opinion with more emphasis on extra-religious problems, sociological, economic and political, than on purely church matters. He has succeeded in making it comparable to those other excellent journals, the *Churchman*

and the *Christian Century*. He was one of the first liberal clergymen to take fundamentalism seriously as a menace, and his vigorous editorials have done much to spur Unitarians and other liberals into a defense of the faith against the onslaughts of the Orthodox. He is uncompromising in his demand for freedom of teaching, and devotes much of his time to lecturing on behalf of religious liberty.

Unfortunately, the records do not show that he has always been so ardent. Although himself of German parentage, he was, during the late crusade for democracy, in the very forefront of the clerical patrioteers who assured us that God was on the American side and against the unspeakable Hun. His editorials, which were later to ring with passionate devotion to religious liberty, were at this time far less devoted to that ideal; on the contrary, he preached a strenuous militarism which denounced in no uncertain terms those few pastors who opposed America's entry into the war on the ground that the spirit of Christ was not compatible with slaughter. But this inconsistency on the part of the liberals, whether Unitarian or not, is characteristic. The liberties they defend are the ones in which they happen to be interested. Dr. Dieffenbach defends religious radicals and denounces pacifists just as the Rev. John Haynes Holmes works himself into a frenzy over violations of the right of free speech but openly approves prohibition.

The home of the association is in Boston and that city has always been the Mecca of Unitarianism. Of the 422 Unitarian churches in the whole United States, at least two-thirds are in New England, and more than twenty in the city of Boston. The best people in Boston have always been Unitarians, as the best people always tend toward clannishness. No one could be prouder of his label than a Boston Unitarian; it stamps him at once as one of the *elite*, devoid of the vulgarities of the common man and shining with intellectual superiority. Not a little of that feeling is well justified ,although of late, along with the general decay of Boston as the American Athens, Unitarianism seems also to be degenerating. But it is still respected in Boston as nowhere else in America, and its clergy are accepted as the full peers of the divines of more Orthodox denominations.

Unitarians have always been clannish even among themselves, and many a pastor outside New England has been heard to complain of the aloofness of headquarters. This aloofness has often been a handicap to Unitarians in other sections of the country, who in their naive idealism have desired to make the church something more than a fashionable club. The case of the Rev. John Haynes Holmes offers an example. Back in 1907, when he was just graduated from Harvard, he was called to the ministry of the Church of the Messiah in New York, then a center of pious and wealthy Unitarianism. He succeeded Dr. Minot Savage, the most illustrious Unitarian preacher of the day, and the pastor emeritus of his church was the famous and venerable Robert Collyer. Mr. Holmes was and is a pulpit orator of extraordinary talent and he quickly attracted large audiences, but before long it was discovered, not without consternation, that he was not only a theological

but also a social and political radical as well, preaching a polite but ardent Socialism. He championed, to the scandal of the denomination in general, all sorts of social heresies, but the unkindest cut of all was his attitude toward the World War. Like his famous colleagues in light and leading, Dr. Fosdick and Rabbi Wise, he was a pacifist before America entered the war, but unlike them he remained one all through it, declaring, "I am opposed to war in general and to this war in particular," and further: "Other pulpits may preach recruiting sermons; mine will not. Other parish houses may be turned into drill halls and rifle ranges; ours will not. Other clergymen may pray to God for victory for our arms; I will not. In this church, if nowhere else in America, the Germans will be included in the family of God's children."

If Holmes had behaved himself in those trying days there seems no doubt that he would have attained to the same position of eminence and respectability within the denomination that was enjoyed by the late Dr. Samuel McChord Crothers and the late Dr. Paul Revere Frothingham, and is still being enjoyed by Dr. Samuel Eliot and Dr. Francis Peabody. For, despite his preoccupation with all the newest schemes for reconstructing society and his championing of every new prophet that comes along, from Rabindranath Tagore and Charles Rann Kennedy to Eugene V. Debbs and Judge Ben B. Lindsey, he is an able man, one of the ablest in a profession that has few able men. But he was never given his just deserts during the time he was a Unitarian minister. His fellow clergymen, especially in Boston, always looked upon him a bit askance as a good man gone wrong. To this day he has not been given any honorary degrees, but remains plain Mr. Holmes, though practically all his more literate colleagues are doctors of divinity. When the war was over he still refused to settle down, and so resigned from the American Unitarian Association in 1919, thereby ceasing to function as a Unitarian clergyman. Although his church remained legally Unitarian, he succeeded in changing its name to the Community Church of New York and announced that it was now "an institution of religion for all people, regardless of race, creed or color."

Boston, as I have hinted, is now losing its old prestige as a Unitarian stronghold, and the most vital influence of the movement is now felt in other parts of the country. Outside of Boston the Unitarians seem to have achieved a genuine freedom for their clergy, who comprise men of all shades and varieties of thought, all dwelling together in surprising harmony. The Rev. Dr. Preston Bradley, of the People's Church in Chicago, who preaches to two thousand people every Sunday while staid old King's Chapel and the Arlington Street Church in Boston are two-thirds empty, is a former Presbyterian and retains many of the mannerisms of the old exhortive type of preacher; to him liberalism is not a cold intellectualism but a great cause which he proclaims with fiery zeal. Dr. William Sullivan, late minister of the Church of the Messiah in St. Louis, is a former priest and teacher at the Catholic University who long since lost intellectual faith in the dogmas of

Mother Church, but seems to have retained the Catholic's mystic sense and feeling for beauty; he remains the only one of his kind, that strange anomaly, a Unitarian mystic. In Indianapolis there is another large Unitarian society whose minister is the Rev. John Dietrich, an extreme rationalist and leader of the humanists; about this group I shall have a word later.

The difference in types among the clergy is also illustrated in New York. Manhattan Island has but three Unitarian parishes, the oldest of which is All Souls, founded in 1819. As befits such a venerable institution, All Souls has always been a citadel of Unitarian orthodoxy and its clergy respected exemplars of the Unitarian tradition. Its parishioners have been people of solid worth in the community; Peter Cooper and Joseph H. Choate were both members and George P. Baker, the banker, has been a trustee for many years. The present pastor, Dr. Minot Simons, is a conservative Unitarian whose liberalism is indistinguishable from the evangelical liberalism of Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick; he is also an ardent denominationalist and in general a perfect type of the Bostonian Unitarian. The Community Church is still a Unitarian body despite the fact that its minister, the aforementioned John Haynes Holmes, has himself resigned from that body. The other New York church is the West Side, formerly known as the Lenox Avenue Unitarian Church. Its minister until recently was the Rev. A. Wakefild Slaten, a theological radical of the most advanced sort, who might also be said to be spiritually more akin to the Free-thinkers Society than to the Unitarian Church.

Here are three men, each of whom differs radically from the others in his approach to religion and each with his own panacea for the reformation of man, mingling one with the other on the most amiable basis in the fellowship of the same organization. It is hard to imagine any other denomination in America, with the possible exception of the Episcopalians, wherein such men could dwell together without one protesting the other's heresy and demanding his expulsion from the body of the truth faith.—*From the American Mercury.*

Why Does the Church Lose So Many Members?

In an address given before the General Conference of the United Brethren Church at its recent meeting in Lancaster, Pa., Dr. J. A. Lytor, associate editor of the Sabbath school literature of that denomination, and chairman of the committee on conservation of Church membership, made the startling statement that six out of every ten members received into that Church on confession of faith were lost to the Church. He claimed that the same was practically true of other churches.

There will always be those who, through lack of genuine faith, will fall by the way. And yet may it not be possible, that if they had been properly helped and guided, they would have been led deeper into the life of Christ and have developed into steadfast Christians?

Often they have been received without a real change of heart. This is a day when it is honorable to be a member of a church. Often it is a doorway into some desired circle of society. This and no other motive lies back of their step. Sometimes it is undue persuasion of friends without any real consideration of what church membership means or involves. The real bond that binds the Christian to Christ is absent, and there is nothing to hold them but the material or social advantage, and they naturally drop away when it no longer exists.

Another reason may be lack of impressiveness in their reception. Too much form is out of place, but too little is liable to leave the person without a sense of the importance of the step taken. Too often the minister and session fail to impress upon the person the meaning of the step and the binding nature of the vows taken. This fact cannot be too strongly emphasized. Imagine any fraternity or lodge receiving members in this way. They do their utmost to impress upon the candidate the principles of the order and the necessity of loyalty to it. As a result their loss is far less than that of the Church. When we receive members into the United Presbyterian Church, we pledge them to earnest religious lives, to faithful attendance on the services of the church, mentioning the Sabbath school and prayer meeting and evening service, and yet the proportion that attends these is strangely small. Evidently they took their vows without any thought of their binding power. They probably had no intention of carrying out their promises. They were made as a sort of mechanical routine.

Another cause for this falling away is that new members are neglected and left to make their own way into the activities and the social life of the church, or drop out with the impression that they are not wanted. They are disappointed and stung by the little attention which they receive after they have been admitted. Too many ministers and members are in such a made chase to get new members that the moment they receive them they leave them alone and go after others. Oftentimes has the writer hooked a fish and got it on the bank, only to see it drop off the hook and "flop" into the water. It is well to be sure that new members are safely landed and connected with some live agency of the church, or at least put into the charge of one or more loyal members who can be relied upon to keep them "landed."

One of the greatest causes for the loss of members is a lack of faithful pastoral work. So much administrative and executive work is now demanded of the minister that he has neither strength or time for faithful pastoral work. Christ sent His disciples out, not only to evangelize but to feed His sheep and lambs. Pastoral duties are sadly neglected in the modern church. Too much emphasis cannot be placed on pulpit work, but no minister is faithful to his charge who is not a faithful pastor. We venture the question as to whether this is not the greatest weakness of the modern church. Few of those who are received into the church will "drop out" if the pastor frequently "drops in" for a friendly salutation and a few sentences of prayer.

Some churches are ice houses. Only those inured to frigid temper-

ature can live in them. It is not enough to have a friendly pastor. There must be a friendly people. A formal handshake is not enough. The heart should be as much in evidence as the hand. The new member should be met by a real friendship. The church is not exactly a social organization, but it will not hold its members unless it is social. It is not enough for some of the old members to be friendly with each other, they must take the new members into the inner circle.—*The United Presbyterian.*

Causes for Religious Decline

(From the report of a sermon at the Cathdral of St. John the Divine, New York, by the Rev. S. P. Delany, D.D., as printed in the New York Herald-Tribune.)

"One rarely meets a Protestant who is enthusiastic about his church," said Dr. Delany. "Scattered over the land are millions of lapsed Protestants who are probably still enrolled as members of some Protestant church, but they rarely, if ever, attend the public worship of their church. No church can long flourish which is composed of absentee pew-holders.

"One of the most potent causes of this dangerous condition," he continued, "is the striking development, during the last several decades, of the institution known as the week end. It has become a commonly accepted axiom with millions of Protestants that the week end is to be spent in some sort of outing or pleasure. As they have never been taught that there was any sort of obligation binding them to attend church on Sunday, church-going has simply ceased to have a place in their lives."

The radio has accelerated the religious havoc wrought by the week end, Dr. Delany said. Because Protestants are inclined to the fallacy that the sermon is the only reason for going to church, he continued, they see no reason why they should not rest comfortably at home on Sunday with a loud speaker near. He said that the radio has not affected attendance at Catholic churches because Catholics recognize their obligation to go to Mass.

"Another cause of the growing weakness of Protestantism," said Dr. Delany, "is the fact that the children of most Protestant parents are receiving an almost entirely secular education. The average Sunday school is too haphazard and casual in its methods to give any effective training in religion. Moreover, the children of the well-to-do classes never see the inside of a Sunday school. They are sent away from home as early as possible to fashionable boarding schools, in which they may receive a smattering of instruction in the Bible. The chief emphasis is laid on secular subjects and social popularity. Any spiritual training is reduced to a minimum."

Religious intelligence among the laity never will be achieved unless children are given the proper religious instruction and training, said Dr. Delany. He added that the only means to accomplish this were week-day religious instruction conducted by the churches for public

school children, or a system of parochial schools. Otherwise, he said, future generations inevitably will be lost to the Church.

"The third cause that is undermining the strength of Protestantism is that it is becoming honeycombed with sceptical modernism," said Dr. Delany. "I am not criticizing conservative modernism, which loyally upholds the articles of the Christian creed and tries to make them intelligible to modern thought. The modernists that I have in mind, who are so common today in the ranks of the Protestant clergy, are the men who say that the facts upon which our faith is based are both true and untrue.

"They tell us that no intelligent man can believe that Jesus is God, that He was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary and that His body rose from the dead. But they say that these things are symbolically true. The trouble with these modernists is that they are trying to eat their cake and have it. They have ceased to believe in the historic Christian faith. But they wish to hold on to their positions as authorized teachers of that faith."

The Sermon

In sermons, as in comestibles, it is eminently true that "one man's meat is another man's poison." Yet the successful restaurateur or cafeteria director makes such a study of the markets and of the habits and tastes of his patrons, that he is able to cater to the multitude, and send his customers away pleased with what has been set before them and disposed to come again and bring others.

The analogy between preachers and caterers, sermon-tasters and hungry men, must not be pressed too far. However, it may yield some suggestions to the man who has the responsibility of feeding the flock of Christ.

If there is one thing that can no longer be practiced in Protestant churches it is "forced feeding." It may have been otherwise in the days of the Puritan supremacy in New England, when the settled minister exercised such influence and authority that his word was law in the parish, and the waiting congregation sat through long services three times on Sunday, and accepted the doctrine as if it were a sin to criticize or reject it. That type of listener has gone, and with it that type of sermon. The preacher can no longer expect his hearers to swallow submissively whatever he dogmatically declares.

The congregation has undergone a change, which the minister must take into account. One can scarcely imagine John Wesley himself preaching the same sermons today which revolutionized eighteenth century England. He would speak out of the same burning heart, he would emphasize no less the all-embracing love of God, he would be so possessed with the responsibility of his mission and message that he would plea "as dying man with dying men." But that these great qualities alone would win and hold vast congregations is more than doubtful. If any one believes the power is still in them, let him memorized one of his published discourses, and run the risk of plagiarism by preaching

it to his Sunday night congregation. They simply will not take their sermons that way.

Dr. A. S. Peake, distinguished Methodist scholar, has recently put the situation very strikingly and, as we think, accurately, in an address to a group of London Free Churchmen, on "The Minister and His Positive Message." It will bear quoting to an American audience:

"The suitation which confronts us is one of extraordinary interest and difficulty. It was so even before the war, but the war raised new problems and intensified the pressure of the old problems. The task before us is one which will challenge all our faith and courage, and call for the most strenuous labor. We see about us a people largely alienated from organized Christianity, largely indifferent to religion, flippant, pleasure-loving, incredulous, despairing, wistful. Yet in many of these hearts there is a homesickness for God."

"The old type of sermon—a lengthy, labored, abstract, and often arid discourse on theological themes—has gone. The hearers of the present day demand something briefer, more picturesque, more concrete, more relevant to their daily life. The power of attention is diminished in hearers; they cannot hold on for so long; they are easily fatigued by the strain of following a connected argument. Moreover, religion has to face far more competitors than formerly. Hence sermons must be less technical and dry, more vivid and concrete, briefer, simpler, and lit up with more illustration."

Doctor Peake did not say—what perhaps may not be true of England, but what we suspect is, unfortunately, true of America—that a change has also come over the preacher himself, and over the conditions under which he must do the work expected of him. The great preachers of former days had much time to themselves. Sunday was The Day. The sermon was the event of the week. Everything in the minister's life revolved about the preparation of the discourse. His reading, his thought, were largely concerned with the message he should bring and with plans to frame it in the most attractive and effective form. Today what a change! Look at the pastor's calendar for any week, and observe the distracting and time-consuming engagements he must fulfill in the line of pastoral duty, every day in the week and many hours in the day. Where on his engagement pad are the seasons for study, reflection, sermon preparation? If he shall retire to his study, lock his door, and sit down at his desk, he finds it piled with communications from officials, at Fifth Avenue, Arch Street, Rush or Plum, or from his district superintendent, bringing to his mind certain connectional interests of which he realizes that he is "the applied end." And even if by some miracle his desk is clear, there is the standing menace of the telephone, whose jangling bell has ditched many a train of thought richly freighted with ideas which might have been the making of a sermon. He is an unfair critic of present day preaching who fails to consider how the other demands of the churches have almost relegated sermon-making to the museum of "lost arts."

Book Review

(When ordering books, please mention this Magazine.)
NOTE—*Reviews, when not signed, are by the Editor.*

The Word of God and the Word of Man, by *Karl Barth, D.D.* (Professor at the University of Muenster, Westphalia). Translated by Douglas Horton. The Pilgrim Press, 1928. 327 pages.

The book is a translation of Barth's "Das Wort Gottes und die Theologie." It contains eight addresses, held at different times, mostly before audiences of students and ministers, and aims to give an outline of Barth's contribution to the religious thought of the time.

It is well known that Barth is hailed as a star of the first magnitude in the theological sky of Germany. It has been said of him that he "saved Protestantism" in the land of our fathers, and, again, that he is the greatest religious thinker since Schleiermacher. To us this seems a wild exaggeration, but in Germany there might be hundreds and even thousands to whom such a characterization would seem nothing but the indisputable truth.

When we read Barth's "Roemerbrief," after communication had been established at the end of the war, we did indeed have the feeling that a new and powerful voice was speaking. At the same time we were greatly puzzled. We had never read such a commentary before. There was an absence of all the literary and historical material that commentators are in the habit of furnishing. Paul—so it seemed—wrote his letter not to the Israel or the church of his time; he wrote it to the Protestant Church of the twentieth century. Not Israel had rejected the gospel, but the modern church had. The great problem or thesis of the epistle was not justification by faith but God and the soul, time and eternity.

The writer spoke of his theme with the fulness, seriousness and authority of an Old Testament prophet. His style, however, was not that of the Old Testament prophet; it was the voice and manner of Kierkegaard, come to life again. Like Kierkegaard ("credo quia absurdum est") he had adopted the paradoxical method, the yes and no of the "dialectic" manner; a thesis always followed by our antithesis, often leaving it for the reader to find the synthesis in the writer's contradictions. It was a most provoking, yea, exasperating, way of speaking and for the reviewer it made a whole-hearted enjoyment of the book impossible. We felt that this man might indeed be a man with a message, but that we would in all probability have to leave him alone.

Since then Barth has gone on ahead and his influence and fame have grown apace. The strange thing is that he has found the readiest acceptance with the conservatives although he had originally belonged to the liberal school, W. Hermann of Marburg being his revered teacher.

He used to belong to the friends of "the Christliche Welt"; now the pages of that paper often give room to those who take a critical attitude towards him.

In America Barth is little known and those who do know him don't know what to make of him. Professor Knudsen calls him the German Fundamentalist—which explains little and is only true in part. Dr. Bixler, of the "Christian Century," went to Germany to make his personal acquaintance. He tells us he is "not convinced." R. Niebuhr, in a brief review of this book says he is afraid Barth's teachings will not furnish a strong dynamic for social reform. We agree with him. Barth confesses in this book that he belongs with those for whom the ethical objective has taken the definite form of the socialistic ideal and that it won't do to be an impassive, thorough-going disbeliever in the social state and in world peace. But no one, he says, can imagine what the future will bring. Our own goals are always imperfect and fall short of the ultimate goal, and as to bringing in the better, that is entirely in the hands of God. "No longer do we find our task in trying to promote our infinitely imperfect but infinitely perfectible culture. The ethics of the Ritschlian school were the ethics of the bourgeoisie growing prosperous. The ethics of Troeltsch are the ethics of the new German economic civilization, which did not wholly abandon its Christianity, especially in its social hope."

These words show Barth is socially interested. But after making concessions, he leaves the human factor and returns to "the thought of God," his favorite and all-embracing, all-engulfing theme, a theme on which one cannot speak, however, he claims, except in the "dialectic" manner. After this we are on our logical see-saw again. "Our task is to interpret the Yes and the No and the No by the Yes without delaying more than a moment in either a fixed Yes or a fixed No; to speak of the glory of God, for example, only to pass immediately to emphasizing God's complete concealment from us in that creation; to speak of death and the transitory quality of this life only to remember the majesty of the wholly other life which meets us at the moment of death . . . . to speak of sin only to point out that we should not know it were it not forgiven us. According to Luther, God's justification of man is to be explained only as justificatio impii. When a man realizes, however, that he is an impius and nothing more, he awakes to the fact that he is a justus . . . . He that has ears to hear will understand my meaning. I mean that the question is the answer because the answer is the question. We take joy in the answer, once we have heard it clearly, in order at the same moment to ask our question anew and more insistently, because we know we should not have the answer if we did not continue to have the question." Now there may be sense in all this—no doubt there is—but the American mind would prefer a plain "yes" or a plain "no". This tight-rope walking makes a person dizzy who is not used to it.

Barth parts, indeed, company with the Liberals. If they hark back to Kant and his "categorical imperative," he claims that there is not—

nor ever was—any such thing in time or space as a human will determined by pure practical reason. If to Schleiermacher, "Schleiermacher is disastrously dim-sighted in regard to the fact that man as man is not only in need but beyond all hope of saving himself. It is impossible to appeal both to Schleiermacher and the Reformers, both to Schleiermacher and the New Testament, both to Schleiermacher and the Old Testament prophets." Modern Liberalism considered dogmatics a difficult and ethics a relatively easy undertaking. The Epistle to the Romans was regarded as weighted down and obscured by the history of the times, while the Sermon on the Mount seemed lucid and well adapted to modern preaching. From it we come to learn how to "follow Jesus." This optimism is gone since the ways of European man are now (since the War?) proved impossible in relation to the ethic of Christianity. The epistle to the Romans with its condemnation of man and all his ways and its grace of God as the only source of hope is being restored to its rightful place. The Reformers' message of the cross of Christ and his resurrection are in the center again. Barth puts a heavy emphasis on these great facts although his interpretation of them is not the conventional one. He does not speak of atonement or of our being born again with Christ, i. e., in his resurrection, to a new life. He never speaks of the Christian man, always only of God. Christian experience, assurance of salvation are methodistic and pietistic terms of questionable value. Barth is great in putting the minus sign before everything human; he waxes eloquent only if he returns to "the thought of God." Being a Calvinist of the purest water, he stresses the sovereignity of God to the utmost limits. "Theocentric" theology had been trying to come into its own (Schaeder): Barth puts divine absolutism on the throne ("God-seeking isolation-ism").

Barth makes no claim, in this book, to have already a theology of his own. What he has to say is only a "marginal note" to the theology of others. Since then he has done a little constructive work along this line, we hear.* We are not acquainted with these later steps. He calls his position a theology of the crisis. If by that he means a bankruptcy declaration of all our theological attempts, it is well named, for such it is. As a critic he is splendidly equipped; he is well informed, penetrating, sure of himself. As with the speaker with tongues, his speech bursts from him without effort, but those who have not the spirit of interpretation will derive only limited benefit.

Leaves from the Notebook of a Tamed Cynic, by *Reinhold Niebuhr*. Willett, Clark and Colby, Chicago. 1929. 198 pages, $2.00.

Only a year ago the author wrote his first book, "Does Civilization Need Religion?" It is no exaggeration to say that it proved one of the best sellers of the year; that it was put in first place by the various religious book clubs; that it give Niebuhr a scholarly reputation equaled by few and surpassed by hardly any one. Everybody wanted to

* "Prolegomena zur Dogmatik."

know this new writer. He had already been a welcome figure on the platform of numerous college audiences. Now the desire to hear him spread all over the country, and great was the surprise of many who had never seen him in the flesh, to note that he was such a young man. Reviewer may be mistaken but he can recall no writer in recent years who rose to such fame and influence while still this side of forty.

No wonder that the public was eager to hear more from this unusual youngster. No wonder that the "Christian Century" and its editor, Dr. Morrison, ardent admirers of Niebuhr, for quite some time, induced him to put out this new book, with its extraordinary title and its unexpected contents, so soon after the first. Niebuhr had been in the habit of making notes on his experiences in the ministry and on the relation of the church to the important questions of the day. He had been doing this for 13 years, so that these notes might be called a diary of the period. They are naturally not as intimate as some of the "Confessions" which church leaders of the past have left to posterity. Nor do they say much of the struggles and experiences of the Christian soul as it tries to find in Christ its corner stone. They are in no way like the biographical chapter in the careers of our pietistic ancestors. No, they are as far removed from our Rieger, or Nollau, or Irion "Notebooks" as they possibly can. In fact, to compare Niebuhr's book with those others gives one, in striking and revealing contrast, a feeling of the difference in view point between the writer of 1929 and those of 80 years ago.

Niebuhr says himself that perhaps he lacks somewhat the mystical element in religion. There is in the book little introspection. The problem, so great and overpowering to Luther, of "how to get a gracious God," is not even touched. Religion and the church as trying to leaven society, or the economic world, with the gospel of Jesus Christ, this is the one and only subject of the book. Naturally other questions of interest to the minister are discussed occasionally, but his broadsides he reserves for the social gospel. It would be interesting to know how Niebuhr, so early and so fully, came under the influence of this movement. Of course it was in the air and Detroit was the soil where it might naturally develop—by contrast. Still, there were other young ministers in Detroit who did their work as their fathers had before. What books or people influenced our author? So we ask, but the "Notebook" does not enlighten us on the subject.

At any rate, to set the message of a "gospel of love against a society enmeshed in hatreds and bigotries and engulfed in greed," such became to him the mission of the church and its ministers. When such is your strategy, he says, when here is the center of your advance, untenable positions of ancient orthodoxy are naturally abandoned. You become a theological Liberal. The reconstruction of society on Christian principles is such a huge and serious task that you can't afford to fritter away your strength on abstract speculations or antiquated controversies. He has, however, never put undue emphasis on the points where he diverged from the orthodox path; nor has he any use

for the intellectual Pharisee who prides himself on his enlightenment but doesn't lift the burden resting on the shoulders of the submerged classes. "The sorriest preachers are those who preach a conventional morality while they try to be intellectually and theologically radical."

The notes touch on many sides of the ministerial experiences. They take us into the pulpit, the Sunday school, the confirmation class, the sickrcom, the forums. They show the writer wrestling with the problems of the ordinary minister. And, presently, they show the author in places where few of us can follow. We see him affecting his community, other denominations, the church at large. He early showed his bent; he made a place for himself by sheer ability and earnestness of purpose. He has a message and delivers it, superbly equipped by a searching intelligence and—may we not say?—"because the Spirit of the Lord is upon him to preach the gospel (of the Kingdom) to the poor, deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Secrets of Effective Living, by *James Gordon Gilkey.* The Macmillan Co., New York City. 1927. 172 pages.

In the May issue of the "Magazine" (pp. 228ff) we discussed a book by the same author (the minister of the South Congregational Church of Springfield, Mass.) on "the Certainty of God." A thoughtful study of history, the upward trend of the biological process, the mystical experiences of some of the leaders in the religious field, and our own personal development, so Gilkey reasoned, make the faith in a divine intelligence and its loving interest exceedingly likely.

We may not arrive at certainty, but it is a pretty safe guess; in the absence of conclusive scientific proof it is well for us to follow the light we have rather than give up to skepticism because we have not complete evidence. We saw, at that time, the not altogether satisfactory nature of Gilkey's reasoning. He had taken the position that for us men of the 20th century the words of scripture and even of Jesus were not authoritative any more; that even Jesus might have "guessed wrong," and that, before science has unveiled the mysteries of the universe, we ought to be satisfied with probability (one thinks of Lessing saying: "Give me the left hand, God, with its eternal quest after truth; absolute truth is for thee only"). The Christian cannot be satisfied with "pretty safe guesses." We described the Christian attitude on page 229 of that review.

In this present book Dr. Gilkey is not busy again with the task of adjusting Christian teaching to the new intellectual environment of today. Here he takes up life's every day problems and tries to offer a technique of living which will, as he says, make hitherto defeated people more than conquerors through him that loved us. There are eight chapters in the book and the eight problems he grapples with are: "Learning to live without worry; Making the most of ordinary abilities; Adjusting to unwelcome limitations; Improving one's self-control;

Meeting and solving new problems; Managing the little annoyances of life; Relieving inward tensions; Utilizing one's reserve powers."

One sees at once that all these problems are very close and real to the modern man, whose life is at high tension and who needs, therefore, the steadying hand of a wise and experienced guide. Many of us have developed a case of "nerves", an affliction unknown to the scriptures, by name, at least, if not in fact. If any one can make a contribution towards helping those who are suffering from nervous attacks, he shall be called a benefactor of his age. Gilkey does. Let us hear what he says about learning to live without worry.

How can a man conquer his fears, how live without worry? If he is worn down physically he should first build up reserves of strength. Some people's temperament is a help to them, to others it is a burden. Fanny Crosby, the blind hymn-writer of the last century, lost her sight when six years old. In her eighth year she resolved not to weep and sigh because she was blind. When 92 years old, after 86 years of total blindness she said: "I never fret, never worry, never think disagreeable thoughts, never find fault with anything or anybody. If in all the world you can find a happier person than I am, do bring him to me. I should like to shake his hand." Her temperament enabled her to begin the battle against wrong with an enormously powerful ally.

If a person is not so fortunately equipped, some practical suggestions will help him. 1) Remind yourself that worry is always a waste of effort and sometimes life has a strange habit of thrusting new and helpful elements into a given situation. The author quotes a wonderful experience from the life of Morse, the inventor of the telegraph.

If the situation is out of your hands, abandon your futile worries and wait for the future to bring its own inevitable developments." O rest in the Lord, wait patiently for him"—is the way scripture puts it. 2) Remember you have only one problem to face at a time. Handle your problems quietly and in sequence. 3) Gain, by constant practice, the power to control your own mind. Build up by long and determined practice the power of mental and emotional self-mastery. Keep your thought fixed on some great truth like this: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath thee are the everlasting arms." Centuries ago a Hebrew poet wrote out of his own hard experience, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose *mind* is stayed on thee." What was that but the mental self-mastery of which we were speaking?"

Good advice this, we think, and so you will find the book all the way through. The reviewer's wife read the book from start to finish. She is enthusiastic in her praise of it. It is a "safe guess" you will join her in eulogy if you read the little volume. It abounds in new and telling illustrations, the preacher will want to use them at the first opportunity.

Martin Luther as a Preacher, by *Harold J. Grimm, A. M.*, Instructor of European History Capital University, Columbus, Ohio. Lutheran Book Concern. 136 pages. $1.50.

The Lutheran Book Concern a few days ago sent in a number of its recent publications for review. We selected this one because of its attractive title, and we don't hesitate to say that if the others are up to this one we shall congratulate the Book Concern most cordially. Luther's life and work are an inexhaustible fountain, but it takes a Lutheran, apparently, to bring out all its freshness. So much has been said about Luther in general and his preaching in particular, that it might seem almost impossible to say anything new. Nevertheless the author has written a book that one reads from start to finish with undiminished interest. He has studied the literature on the subject, not only Koestlin, Boehmer, Buchwald, but also Lindsay, McGiffert, Preserved Smith, and others. And he quotes these sources carefully and honestly, he is not satisfied with putting his borrowed matter only in quotation marks, as is the custom in most of our books.

Before giving the sermons he first portrays the preacher. Preserved Smith says of Luther's best portrait that it "gives so plain an impression of will and strength of character, that all who run may read." Luther's voice was clear, ringing and flexible, as stirring as a bugle or as soothing as a lute (Hastings). It carried well for at one time 25,000 people gathered to hear him in the city court of Zwickau.

Luther was the outstanding pulpit orator of his time. His characteristics were manliness of character a sympathetic love for humanity, and a poetic love for nature. The writer dwells on Luther's undaunted courage. Ulrich von Hutten says of him: "Borne up by divine inspiration he rejects all human council and relies solely upon God. He despises death as no one ever did." He had a strong and gigantic will, which instead of being crushed by opposition or frightened by hatred, only rose in the face of both into a prouder and grander attitude of daring (Tulloch).

No man in history has more thoroughly represented and more completely dominated his time (P. Smith). We haven't the space to show how beautifully the author describes Luther's love for humanity. Luther was trained as a monk, was in fact a monk until 42 years of age. It is, therefore, truly wonderful to recognize in him such a variety of human interest and affection. He was of all the Reformers the least technical and narrow in his feelings. His genial and vivifying humanity broke through conventional bonds, brushed them aside, and more than anything else, brought him nearer to the hearts of the German people (Tulloch).

After giving Luther, the preacher, a very full and informing chapter, pointing out his spiritual as well as his cultural qualities, and a chapter on the Reformer's audience, the author devotes two chapters to Luther's sermons and homiletics. Luther considered the sermon the most important part of the service. Its object is to proclaim the word (law and gospel), for the word of God only converts the soul; it

kindles the faith and sustains it. To do this, the sermon must expound the doctrine, then its teachings must be strengthened by Bible texts. Illustrations are to be given to clarify and make vivid the truth, finally, it is to be applied to the preacher's audience.

The style is to be simple. Luther says, he doesn't preach to Melanchthon, Bugenhagen or Jonas, but to his little Hans, Lena and Elsa. "He would be a foolish gardener who would attend to one flower to the neglect of the whole garden."

Luther seldom prepared his sermons in detail; only the general outline and the main theme were fixed before hand. But a man who prayed so much, had been through so many trials, a man whose retentive memory carried to him materials from numberless sources, was really never unprepared.

He preached an average of 150 sermons a year. They were transmitted to us by his friends and followers, from notes taken during their delivery, the compilers adding much of their own to them.

We have given only a few morsels of the rich fare the author sets before us. With this book in his hands, every one ought to be able to preach a good sermon on Reformation Day. More than that, reading this little volume opens a well of inspiration that will stand the preacher in good stead, not only when he is to preach a sermon but also when he needs to strengthen his faith in the power of the gospel Luther preached.

The Social Causes of Denominationalism, by *H. Richard Niebuhr, Ph.D.* Henry Holt and Co., New York City. 1929. 304 pages, $2.00.

It was Max Weber, the German economist, we think, who first pointed out the close relation between the teachings and beliefs of the churches and the influence of their economic environment. The beliefs of the churches are by no means derived directly from the scriptures. In the choice between different interpretations and in the emphasis put upon some things rather than others, natural temperament, historical developments and the economic situation play an important if often unconscious part. One of the startling theses which he worked out in this connection was that Calvinism is the parent of Capitalism. The stress Calvin put on productive work, the frugality demanded of the Christian, the hard discipline the individual was put under, must in the nature of the case lead to the accumulation of riches. The Reformed religion removed the ban laid on usury and interest in general. Here we have the factors that in course of time were bound to produce the capitalistic system. This thesis has been opposed by Tawney and others, but a certain large amount of truth in it has been admitted.

Ernst Troeltsch, the famous German theologian and philosopher, took his cue from Weber. He was, like him, interested in the sociological aspect, rather than the theological, of church history. In his monumental work, "The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches and Groups," he surveyed the history of Catholicism and Protestantism

from the standpoint of sociology. He distinguishes three types of church forms, the institutional (national) churches, the sects, and the mystics (or spiritualizers). Only the first two have developed social programs. The institutional churches were conservative, standpatters, preservers of the status quo. The sects were revolutionary. They started out with an emotional experience, with a religion obtained at first hand. They demanded a social reconstruction, giving the disinterested a just part in the material possessions and political rights. But they could not carry their program to realization, either because of persecution or because, in the second and third generations, they grew in wealth and numbers and became churches, denominations, sloughing off the revolutionary part of their message. As a result of all this, Troeltsch said, the churches (or sects) have failed to work out a social program adequate for our time. They have little light to give as to how the ethics of Jesus can be applied to the modern complex situation.

Richly nurtured on the writings of these men, and a multitude of others, the author of the book before us subjects the social character of the denominations to the closest scrutiny. His "thesis is that the causes of schisms have always been dominantly sociological rather than theological; that the most important characteristic of any sect or church is it cultural type, not its theology or its polity. Economic, racial, sectional and nationalist groups have adapted the gospel to their own peculiar ends and points of view, and accordingly have reinterpreted doctrine, accommodated ethics, and modified polity. Hence the churches are described not as Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist, Calvinist, but as churches of the disinherited, as churches of the bourgoisie, as sectional, national and racial organizations. Differences of doctrine, polity and piety are traced to these social roots" (from the Prospectus).

The writer says the book is an outcome of a course in "Symbolics" which he was called upon to teach some years ago. The effort to distinguish churches primarily by their reference to doctrines, etc., seemed so artificial to him that he turned from theology to history and sociology for a more satisfactory account of denominational differences and a more significant approach to the question of union. If this book, then, is a kind of modern "Symbolics" it will serve notice upon theology and theologians that it and they, if they want to adjust themselves to the times, must undergo a very thorough overhauling.

The writer now undertakes the tremendous task to study the history of denominationalism from the view point of the sociologist. He begins with the Reformation period and gives the often neglected sects of that time, such as the Anabaptists, e. g., the same attention as the great Lutheran and Calvinistic churches. Instead of reserving the name of churches for the latter, and of sects for the former, he subsumes them all under the name of "denominations" and makes the suggestive contention that denominationalism is a compromise between the Christian ideal and the force of outward circumstances, an "accommodation to the caste system of society." The divisions of churches, he says, follow

the divisions into national, racial and economic groups. Protestantism produces not only national churches but also churches of the rich and the poor in the same country. The orthodox explanation of denominationalism is sought in the different creeds, but the "religious life is so interwoven with social circumstances that the formulation of theology is necessarily conditioned by these." What is the underlying cause of the difference between "church" and "sect"? Is it a divergent creed? No, it is the divergence in the economic status. The sect is always the church of the poor at first. To the poor religion is all they have. They adopt it with their whole heart, in an emotional, conscious, overpowering experience. And they expect that, endued with the liberty of God's children, they will get an adequate share of the possessions of their Father's world and a corresponding recognition of their personal values. The sect in the second generation or third, when wealth and social elevation has come to its members, always becomes a church, in the desirable and less desirable sense of the word.

In two chapters on the "Churches of the Disinherited" Niebuhr traces the history of the early sects of Protestantism. They first joined with the Reformation because they expected economic and political readjustments. But Calvinism had a contempt for the "common man." Nor had Luther a message for them (cp. his fierce denunciation of the peasants in the Peasants' War). The Anabaptists were persecuted with the most heartless cruelty. In England Quakerism was the Anglo-Saxon parallel to Anabaptism. The Quakers were hated with an equal ferocity. But here they managed to maintain themselves. A leader of first class ability and migration to a new continent gave them a great chance. They accommodated themselves to a new situation; became wealthy. Their religious fervor cooled. "The second generation holds its convictions as a heritage, for a first who won it at painful cost." They found that godliness is conducive to economic success; that working in your trade as in your God-given calling makes for material progress. Quakerism rose in the social scale, and once more the poor were without a gospel."

The same is true of Methodism although Methodism was never wholly a movement of and by the Disinherited. J. Wesley did say at one time, "You are poor almost to a man." But he also saw and preached that industry, the simple life and self-discipline would in the end lead to prosperity. He advised generous giving as the salvation for Methodists growing rich. The message, however, of a thoroughgoing reconstruction was entirely absent from his preaching. His ethic was and remained entirely individual, he insisted on sobriety, honesty, Sabbath-keeping; swearing and smoking excited him more than the oppression and degradation of the poor. Methodism became the religion of the middle class.

Methodism was the last revolution of the Disinherited in Christendom. The revolutions in the 19th century were entirely secular in character while those of the preceding ones had been religious. Socialism awakened the sense of social solidarity and gave the individual the

enthusiasm of participation in a world-changing event. "But for the angels who fought on the side of Baptists and Quakers it substituted economic laws, and in the place of the early coming of the Son of Man it anticipated the class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat." The absence of an effective social idealism in the churches and a cold temper resulting from Rationalism were one great cause of the growth of Socialism.

After a chapter on the Churches of the Middle Class and one on Nationalism and the Churches, the writer, in two chapters on Sectionalism and Denominationalism, takes up the interesting questions of the influence of our material conquest of the American continent, our forward-moving boundary until the Pacific coast was reached, with all the consequences it had on the American temperament, its boundless optimism, its impatience with tradition, its pragmatic view of life, and its insistence of adjusting institutions to changing situations. Once more individualism moved into first place. Personal values pushed hereditary distinction into the background. Natural rights and a more democratic type of government made themselves imperiously felt. The established order of the East found itself in frequent conflict with the revolutionary West. Primitive circumstances again made a fertile soil for old-time revivalism. The love of democracy and individual morality were the core of the West's political and religious creed, and those churches which could adjust themselves best to the demands of the hour survived. In a highly informative chapter, apparently covering the whole ground, the author shows how Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Baptists, Methodists and Disciples reacted to the situation: the Methodists remained as victors in the field, owing to their adaptability, vitality and superior organization. Any one interested in the social causes of the modern advance or failure of American denominations will here find authentic and well arranged source material. We are sorry not to have space for the highly interesting chapters on the Immigrant Churches and the "Color Line."

The author has finished his tremendous task. A survey of a field of such vastness, of movements of such infinite variety required not a little research and of keen-eyed analysis, especially since so little pioneer work has been done here, so far. He has attempted to show that the division of the churches is not so much Bible-made or creed-made; that it is not so much God-appointed as of man's own doing. Man's and the churches' environment and heredity are the outstanding responsible factors for it. He has been largely successful, we think, in establishing his thesis. And remember he never claimed that religious causes were not also effective in the development of denominational divisiveness; only they were not the only causes or the chief ones, he submitted. He leaves room for the notable fact that in churches which naturally belong in the conservative and institutional class as, e. g., the Episcopal communion, prophetic personalities sometimes arise, espousing the cause of the "disinherited," like Kingsley in England and Bishop Williams in America; that they arise because the Spirit "blow-

eth where it listeth" and lays bare to them social aspects of the Word that had long been overlooked or forgotten.

But are these divisions to be permanent, is there not a way to unity, he asks in the concluding chapter. There is a way but not an easy one. He lies not in divine miraculous intervention; it lies in a gradual growth of knowledge and of Christian aspiration. "The road to unity is the road of repentance. It demands a resolute turning away from all those loyalties to the lesser values of the self, the denomination, and the nation which deny the inclusiveness of the divine love. It requires that Christians learn to look upon their separate establishments and exclusive creeds with contrition rather than with pride. It asks of churches and individuals that they lose their lives in order that they may find the fulfilment of their better selves. But it is also the road to the eternal values of a Kingdom of God that is among us."

The book represents work done on almost virgin soil, as far as we know. Weber and Troeltsch may have been the pioneers on the European continent but Niebuhr has blazed the trail through the American forest. He had a clear-cut thesis and he has kept it straight before him without ever losing sight of it. He had a story to tell and he never spared time or effort to learn all about it and tell it well. We congratulate him most cordially on this his opus primum. His diction is faultless, it runs along smoothly; it never wearies and it never pretends to be anything but the adequate expression of the writer's thought.

One feels inclined to compare him and his book with his brother's. There are two classes of writers, we should say, the aristocratic and the democratic ones. The aristocratic ones write for their class, for the scholar, the expert, the democratic seek the popular appeal, they write for the people. The author's brother belongs in the first class. He writes, not knowingly or intentionally, of course, but actually, for the scholar, as he speaks, invariably, for a college audience even when he is addressing an ordinary crowd. Our author, at the present time, stands between the two. The future will tell whether, as a writer, he is going to address himself to the intellectual elite or will endeavor to write so plainly that every one who runs may read.

One word more. If in future publications the author would give a short summary of each chapter, either on the top of the chapter or in some other place, it would be a help to the reader to understand, and to the reviewer to select the chapters he wants to study with particular attention.

Basic Beliefs. An Introduction to Christian Doctrine, by *H. Maldwin Hughes*, M.A., D.D., President of Wesley College, Cambridge, England. 232 pages. $1.50.

The interest in Christian dogmatics has almost fallen to the zero point with the ordinary pastor. He is either entirely concerned with practical matters, in the narrow sense of the word, or if he desires intellectual food he seeks it in the field of sociology and kindred areas.

Still, it seems to us his immediate pulpit needs would be more in the doctrinal sphere. What to think of God, of man, of sin, of redemption, of Jesus Christ, of the work of the Holy Spirit, are questions which in one way or the other he must wrestle with almost every Sunday. Hence a book that treats of these things in a plain, straightforward way ought to be at his very elbow. Such a book is the one just now under discussion. It is the product of a man who is at the head of an institution belonging to a communion generally considered quite orthodox (the Wesleyan Methodists), but on examining his "Introduction to Christian Doctrine" (the subtitle of the book), we find him to have an open mind. He is sure that in spite of all the investigations of recent scholarship the foundational truths of the Christian faith remain unshaken although changes of form and statement may in many cases be required. The certainties of the religious life are the fruits of experience, they are born out of the fellowship with God, and the mere denials of him who lacks this experience cannot unsettle them.

All our Christian faith is based on the Bible and on the experience of the Christian church. The Bible is the record of a progressive divine self-revelation. It is not equally inspired in all its parts. Crude ideas of God are in time replaced by more adequate ones. In Christ, his person and teachings, God's relation to man reaches its goal. Inspiration of the Bible means that the writers of the Bible wrote under divine guidance and direction. It does not exempt them from literary and historical scrutiny (higher and lower criticism).

The Old Testament teaches, in a progressive way, what kind of a God the God of Israel is. The nature of this teaching is not speculative or abstract but wholly practical. He made the world, he chose Israel and trained it to be his instrument to first have the true knowledge of God and then spread it to the Gentiles.

Jesus Christ is the highest and only adequate revealer of God. He calls him the father, the universal father. He is the father of the race because he created it. His fatherhood is universal, but sonship towards him is potential; it becomes actual when man enters into right relations to God. Jesus is truly human and truly divine. There is no question of his true humanity. But neither can there be of his divinity. He so reveals God that it can be said, God is like Christ. He is sinless, perfect, and has a relation to the Kingdom of God, to the life and death of the believer that can only be predicated of a divine person. His cross shows what sin is, what God thinks of sin; and what God's love is, what he does, is willing to do for man. Here we are not quite satisfied with the author. He is certainly right in saying that after all the attempts to explain the cross we have not reached finality. Still the cross means more than he seems to state. Does it not show that Christ, the second Adam, reached perfection and victory in obedience to God and keeping faith and love even in unmerited suffering, suffering unto death, and that this victory of the head *guarantees* participation in his triumph to *his members?* He thus is made unto them wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption. When the believer's faith

is weak and his life imperfect, he looks unto Christ and gathers from there new faith that Christ's status shall be his. The writer takes due notice of the particular view points of the biblical writers, of the difference between the Synoptics and John, and the special contribution of Paul. He also discusses the doctrinal controversies that have agitated the church later and led to the statement of her creed.

He is open-minded to the claims and theories of science where they do not conflict with essential elements of the faith. He is willing to accept evolution. He denies original guilt and the connection between sin and death in the sense that there was no death in the world before sin. Paul's teaching on this point he classes with the things Paul took over from Judaism.

The last chapter is on "the Christian Hope," it has to do with eschatology. He is in favor of an intermediate state for those who have not arrived at the full maturity of their Christian development, but he will not dogmatize on this and similar questions. He does not believe in "conditional" immortality. The resurrection of the body, not only soul immortality, has always been an essential part of the Christian heritage. On ultimate universal salvation or, contrarily, on eternal punishment, he reserves judgment, wisely, we think. There are hard sayings in the New Testament which apparently shut out all hope. We should, however, not decide the case by reference to particular passages of scripture but by the whole teaching of the gospel concerning God. "It is unthinkable," he says, "that any limit can be placed to the ministries of the grace of God, whether here or hereafter. God is ready to redeem a man from the deepest hell, if he is capable of responding to the divine love."

We like the book extremely well. It is a lucid, able, illuminating discussion of all the chief elements of the Christian faith. It seeks to meet all objections, but it does not claim to be able to solve every difficulty. It is confident on the main points and open to new light on debatable subjects. Christian ethics did not fall within the scope of the author's task. It would be hard indeed to find a volume which, within such a brief compass, sheds so much light on deep and important matters.

A full and interesting bibliography on the literature of the author's theme and dogmatic material, is appended.